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THE SPORTSMAN'S VADE-MECUM

FOR THE

HIMALAYAS.

SHIKAR DRESS.

THE

Sportsman's Vade-Mecum

FOR THE

Himalayas:

CONTAINING NOTES ON SHOOTING, OUTFIT, CAMP EQUIPMENT, SPORTING YARNS, ETC.,

FULLY ILLUSTRATED.

WITH AN INDEX.

98649

BY

K. C. A. J.

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THE SPORTSMAN'S VADE-MECUM

FOR THE

HIMALAYAS.

WHENEVER the annual shooting season in the glorious Himalayas draws near, many an eager sportsman commences preparing his battery, kit, and stores, for a trip to one of those nullahs where the best heads are to be found, known to the favoured few. What a hurry, bustle, and race there is to get into Kăshmir and push on at once, with some celebrated shikarie, to the nullah where Jones got the big ibex, or to the valley where Smith got the grand markhor, or to that part of Lădāk where last year Robinson saw and stalked, unsuccessfully, the largest Ovis ammon in the world! The men from Bombay have the best of it, compared with those from Bengal, as they get a month's start, and can reach the ground earlier, provided the various snow passes are open; if still closed they have to put up with long, wearying delays, which detract much from the total pleasure of the trip. As they have to leave in September, they cannot have much of a time with the red deer (*Bara singh*), whose horns are likely to be in velvet until the last week of that month, so there is some consolation for the Bengal men.

Well, every man has an idea of his own, sometimes founded on his past experience, sometimes on that of others, and in these notes it is intended to review the most useful patterns of different things taken with him by a sportsman, and the difficulties he may encounter, founded on the experience of the writer. If others find them as useful and suitable as he did during his trips in those regions, he will feel that they were not kept in vain.

Guns and Rifles.

This may be well styled a dangerous subject, as to mention individual makers would lead to the supposition that it was worth my while to puff them; I must therefore omit all names, and trust my readers to believe me when I say I have tried and fired weapons by most well-known, and by some unknown, makers. In the latter category are included those who are local and do not advertise in any papers that have passed through my hands, besides those who have joined the great majority and are now forgotten. From all I have tried I have drawn my own deductions, and to-morrow could select a gun from one house and a rifle from another without any deliberation as to which to choose for a name.

No matter where you buy your weapons, try them yourself—at 100, 150, and 200 yards for the rifle; at 40 yards for the gun. Diagrams are perfectly correct and dependable when supplied, but it is a fact that they have been made by men who have much experience and practice, and represent what can be done with the weapon when in their hands. There are many reasons why you cannot do as well, and, unless you can make fairly average shooting with both barrels, try another and another weapon until you get what you want. One of the commonest sources of irregular shooting is the weight of the pull-off of the triggers; for a rifle they must be heavy, otherwise the left hammer may fall on the explosion of the right barrel. But they should be alike, and you should be thoroughly accustomed to the strain required. Last winter a friend of mine made vile shooting with a gun he had selected after trial at a well-known maker's; he shot so badly that at last he appealed to me. I tried the gun at rabbits bolting across narrow rides cut through high gorse, found the pull-off excessive, told him so, and he had it rectified, making excellent practice subsequently.

When firing snap shots with a rifle you may not heed the pull-off, but at the end of a long stalk, after a good head, you will find that an excessive strain on the forefinger is by no means conducive to good shooting.

Years ago I had a wonderful short-barrelled 12-bore rifle, with patent eccentric triggers; snap-shooting was painful, as the triggers came back over half an inch before the hammers could fall; but

in a stalking shot you had only to press lightly, and gradually the trigger came back, the hammer falling with the sights unmoved, from the time aim had been taken. I do not recommend this pattern, but just mention it as a specimen of how circumstances alter cases.

A Gun for the Himalayas should be 12-bore, breech-loading (but not complicated), with cylinder barrels; a choke is unsuited for ball, and most of the game require a pretty big circle of shot to catch them swooping down and around small glens. I would prefer steel or laminated steel barrels, and hammers below line of sight; springless strikers; bar locks, to insure full thickness of good wood at the small where the great strain comes if the gun falls; top-snap treble-grip action; chambered for Eley's cases; weight at least 7½lb. Be sure you get a solid oak and leather case for it, with reliable turning-over and re-capping machines, measures, cleaning rod, screwdriver, bottles of lock and rangoon oil, wad-cutter, rammer, pull-through barrel cleaner, spare strikers, nipple-wrench for fitting same, bullet-mould, &c.; you can leave out the machines and measures when going to the hills, if you are sure you will not be reloading, and fill up the space with gun rags; but mind you have spare strikers; a broken one may be the source of much discomfort, if not of actual danger, unless replaced.

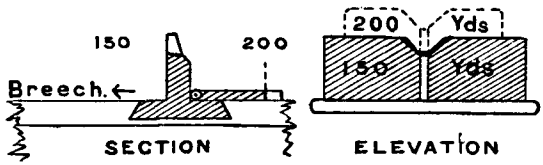
The Rifle may be either ·450, ·500, or magnum ·500. I do not like ·577; it is too large for the smaller game, and unnecessarily powerful for the larger. Just before leaving India I was corresponding with a well-known maker about a ·450 magnum to take 5 drams powder, and to-morrow I would choose that. At the time I was using a ·450 made by him for 4 drams, but I used 4½, and attribute my success to the flatter trajectory even the half dram extra insured. I believe this rifle will kill all Himalayan game if handled fairly, and cannot see why a *sportsman* should require one that will kill *everything, regardless of where it is hit.*

If you do not like such a bore, get the ·500 magnum, sighted for 6 drams. You may as well have the flattest trajectory made, for on many occasions a slight error in judging distance will cause a miss, and opportunities cannot be thrown away—they are by no means plentiful. I recommend the solid, long-drawn brass cases; the coiled do not last as well, nor fire as strong, I believe, and the bottle-shaped give a greater strain to the breech-end of the barrels at the moment of ignition. I have also found that the bottle-

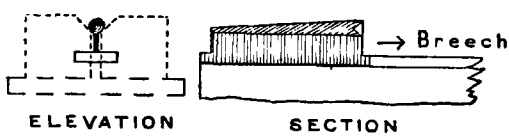
shaped require swedging before they can be used again, while the long-drawn may be fired many times without any such operation; I never swedged my old ·450 or ·500 cases, and used them over and over again.

So much for the bore. The next point is whether it is to be a single or double; if you can afford it, let it be the latter, but if money is an object it is better to have a really first-rate single than any second-rate double. My ·450 was a single, and I never lost or missed game owing to its being so, neither was my life ever in danger from a wounded animal. It may be said I was lucky; but I think I ran little risk, for I never tried shots at bears up above me! I had decided on a double ·450 magnum by the same maker, when duty called me out of India, and, as I said before, that is the weapon I would choose now.

There should be a fixed sight for use up to and at 150 yards, with one leaf for 200 yards. Between these distances I prefer to take a fuller sight according to the increase in elevation required, instead of putting up the 200 and aiming fine; beyond 200, up to 230, you will find a good rifle will fully satisfy your expectations with the 200 yards leaf up, and more foresight visible. The sights



here shown are excellent. There is a platinum line down the centre of the back-sight, and the end of the fore-sight towards the breech is *counter-sunk*, so that it is always a round black object. The height of the back-sight is exaggerated in the sketch, to



enable the pattern to be seen; the fore-sight is about right, and will require a sight protector, such as I have described later on. It is no use having a fore-sight nearly flush on the rib or lump

at the muzzle; it is much more difficult to distinguish, and interferes with the taking of a full or very full sight when required.

Bar-action locks; springless strikers; double-grip under-lever, or treble-grip top-snap action; steel barrels with engine-turned rib; pistol hand-stock; eyes for sling near toe of butt and between the fore-end and muzzle; hammers below line of sight. *Do not buy rebounding locks;* the strain on the cap on explosion of the powder is enormous, and, unless supported by broad-nosed strikers, it is very likely to jam in the striker-hole in the false breech. *Do not have safety bolts* on the locks; they are dangerous. If you give a native a loaded rifle with the safety bolts on, one of two things is likely to happen; he will release the bolt, fiddling with it, and discharge a shot in dangerous proximity if not actually into you, or you will forget about it and be pulling the trigger until it breaks or your game disappears. I removed the safety bolts from my double ·500, having the slots filled with soft solder, and never gave the natives loaded weapons; it was seldom I was not loaded in time, for a snap-shot even. If you have safety bolts there is always the danger of an accident through having the rifle loaded, leaning against a rock or tree, or even through putting it into the waterproof cover without removing the cartridges. Nothing would induce me to use a rifle that had safety bolts working on its locks; out they must come before I would venture on a day's shooting.

A good solid oak and leather case; loading implements and re-capping machine; brass-swivel cleaning rod; screw-driver; spare strikers, and nipple wrench for fitting same; wad cutter and lubricator moulds; bullet mould and plug; lock and rangoon oil; pull-through barrel cleaner in case; *spare fore and back sights* that have been fitted and tried; sling; box caps and anvils for re-capping, being certain they fit the cartridges that suit the rifle; bullet wrappers, and plate to guide in cutting same. (See "Loading Rifle Cartridges.")

Ammunition.

This may be divided into different heads, gun and rifle; but it is most desirable to carry all considered necessary, ready loaded. If you carry the cases and materials, they take up more room, and are more liable to individual damage; sometimes you may want cartridges in a hurry (having used the loaded stock), be

delayed, and so too late for the "big head" the men saw on the other side of the range from camp, half an hour before your return, and while a little daylight was left to go after it. To-morrow that head may be miles away, in another part of the range, and you may not be lucky enough to find out his exact whereabouts again. Sometimes, a couple of bears having been met with, a considerable number of cartridges may have been expended, the stock in hand considerably reduced, and, perhaps, a balance of three left, with which no one would care to start after a good head. The first may kill him at once, but, on the contrary, may miss, and, even if it does bag him, you may subsequently see a better one, miss with the two rounds you had left, and have to let him go, having nothing to fall back upon until you have loaded some more—a work of time if properly carried out. Therefore, it is advisable to have plenty of loaded cartridges.

Number of Cartridges.—The gun so materially aids the larder, it is worth while to have 400 to 500 cartridges, loaded as follows. (The actual charges must be to suit the gun; the size of shot only can be recommended here.)

100	cartridges, No. 2 shot.	Left barrel for pheasants, &c.
150	„ „ 4 „	Right barrel for pheasants, left barrel for chikor.
150	„ „ 6 „	Right barrel for chikor, and generally for black partridge, a stray woodcock, &c.
Total 400		

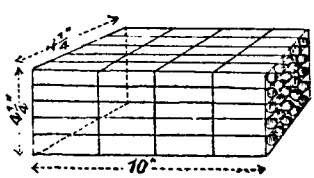
If your gun can fire ball, twenty ball cartridges will be handy, as you may meet a bear on your pheasant or chikor ground, with your rifle-carrier some way off, or you may want a second gun when driving small nullahs for bears, &c.

The rifle being the weapon for "trophies," be sure you have the right sized and shaped cartridges, and the best. Solid (or drawn) brass are better than any coiled, and when cleansed and reloaded, do well for buck, or any other shooting in the plains against timid animals. Against dangerous game a new cartridge is most essential, as a misfire may cost you or your men dearly.

For a six months trip 100 cartridges should suffice; but if fifty more can be carried conveniently, they will form a second reserve. If you carry a larger number, you are liable to be less careful, and blaze away recklessly, doing little in the way of sport, but wounding or frightening many a head. A good sportsman picks

his shots carefully and considerately, and abstains from waste of ammunition, and the killing of females or small and worthless heads. Between travelling, bad weather, and other difficulties, out of the 180 days' leave, you can hardly expect more than 120 days on the shooting grounds, looking for game, though the chance of a shot at a head worth having may be twice in a week; the average, all round, will rarely exceed this. Sportsmen have been six weeks without a shot at anything but an odd bear, and that on ground supposed to be good. Game wanders and moves about so much that, until one has seen it, one cannot say when a shot may be expected. Markhor especially have a wonderful knack of having left just before you reached the ground.

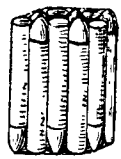
How to Carry Ammunition.—Gun cartridges should be packed in soldered tin boxes of one hundred each, and distributed amongst the three or four bullock-trunks (yāk-dhāns) or leather-covered baskets (kiltās), forming the personal baggage. Divide the numbers of each size shot, so that the proportion is kept up much the same as in the total; you will then use one box at a time, and keep the rest intact. Thus, for a box of 100, put in 25 of No. 2, 33 of No. 4, and 42 of No. 6. Such boxes as these are



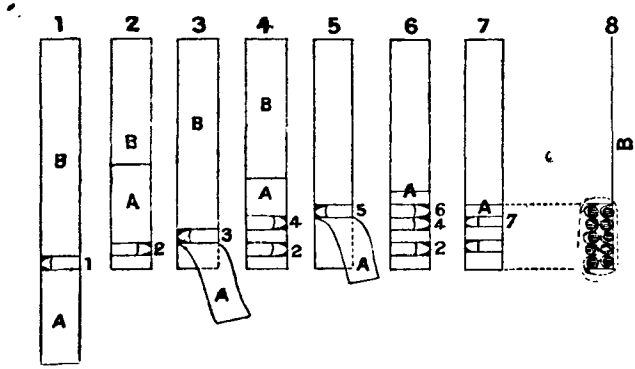
small—10in. by 4¼in. by 4¼in. There will be twenty cartridges in a layer on the bottom, arranged alternately, in rows of five across. There will be room for five of these layers, forming the full case of 100. Any little spaces can be filled in with plugs of paper. If your coolies come to grief, and drop a load into a stream, you will not lose much if the load is not recovered, and nothing if it is fished out, besides distributing the weight fairly amongst the loads. The next best thing to soldering down the lids, and when you want to keep the boxes for further use, is to have the lids to fit well, and, after passing a string round the box when packed, roll it up in wax-cloth twice round, and well overlapping at the ends; then tie it up securely. This will generally suffice, if placed

in the middle of the contents of the box it is to be carried in, but it is not so certain as the soldering down.

Rifle cartridges can be best packed in small tin cases of ten (10), made a little longer than the loaded cartridge, with a tight-fitting top. They should be rather wider than five cartridges placed side by side, alternately bullet and base, and a little more than two cartridges thick. Roll the cartridges in paper, as Government cartridges for the Martini-Henry are rolled, but with



thicker paper, so that there shall be no movement of a single round. Take an ordinary half sheet of the *Times*, or any similar paper, cut it in two down the centre from top to bottom. Double the piece so obtained lengthwise, and do it a second or third time, until its width is about that of the length of a cartridge, see Fig. (1).

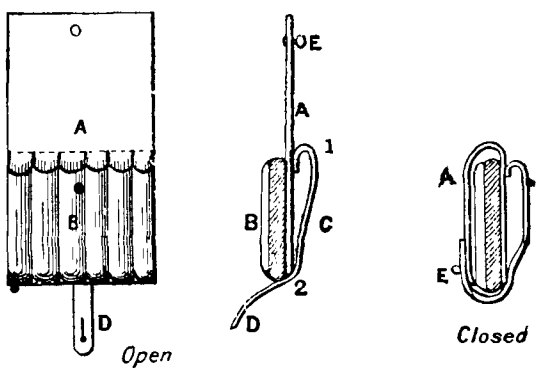


Now place one cartridge across on it, about one-third of the length from you; double up that end (A) over the case and fold it over on B. Lay a cartridge, [2], on A, the opposite way to [1]; double back A, and on B, close against [2], place cartridge [3] (Fig. 3). Now down with A again as in Fig. 4, place cartridge [4] similarly to [2], up again with A, and place [5] similarly to [3] (Fig. 5). Double A down over [5], and place [6] on top of it (Fig. 6) pointing in the

same direction as [2] and [4], and, therefore, the opposite way to [5]. A should be nearly used up now, so bring B over with it and work back to 1, using up B as shown by dotted line in Fig. 8. A bundle of ten will then be formed, which can be readily slipped into the little box, where any surplus paper may be pressed in also. Put on the lid, tie up securely, wrap up in wax-cloth and secure with string. These cases will keep for a long period, and not suffer from damp. Distribute them amongst the loads as n the case of gun cartridges, and you will probably have plenty of ammunition, even if you should lose a load or have it soaked.

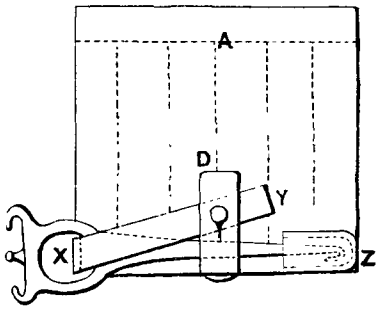
Useful Articles.

Cartridge Pouch.—To carry what one requires in the way of rifle ammunition for immediate use, nothing is better than a leather pouch as under. Six compartments are made by sewing soft calf, or even sheepskin, on to the harder back A, as B, so that six cartridges will each be in a separate place of its own. A doubles down over all to keep off the damp or wet and prevent



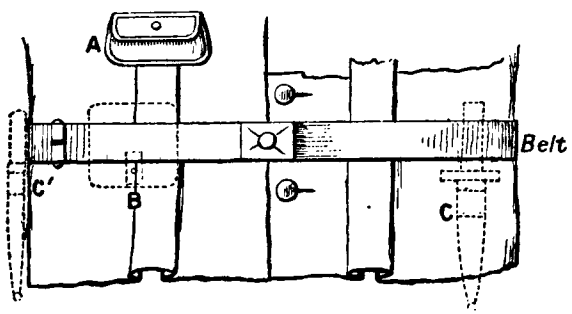
loss, being held down by D, a continuation of C, which is sewn to A at 1 and 2, so as to form a loop for the belt to pass through. This loop, C to D, will be about 1in. wide; it will fit over the stud E and keep A down. A duplicate should be carried by the shikarie in a cartridge bag, with the six rounds in it, all ready to exchange for the first when its contents have been expended. The cartridge bag will be alluded to further on.

Cartridge Extractor.—This is rarely required with a properly built rifle and solid brass cartridges, but a "jam" may occur, and it is better to be prepared. The handiest and safest way to carry it is on the flap A of the cartridge pouch described above. Z is a small pocket sewn on to the corner of A. The hook end of the extractor can be put into this. It should be about 1in. to 1½in.



long. At X a small strap is sewn, which can button on to the stud on A, obliquely. When D, which fastens down A, is passed over the stud, all are secure. It cannot be forgotten when leaving camp, unless the sportsman forgets belt, pouch, and knife, which is unlikely. If carried loose in a pocket, its absence may not be noticed, and discovered too late.

A Small Pocket, above the belt and 1½in. to the right of the edge of the jacket, will be handy to carry two or three rounds in, when the weather is dry. It should be a little longer than the



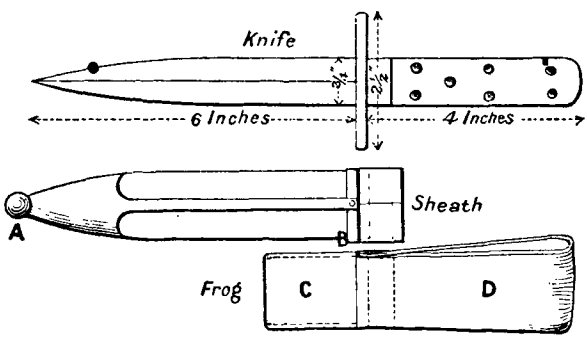
cartridge, and smaller at the mouth than at the bottom. A small flap should button over it, to prevent any falling out when stalking. A correspondent, "Sujanpore," recommends having one

of the above located just by the top button of the coat on the left side, he having found it very useful, especially in a stalk; but it would not be so convenient when firing standing or kneeling, and an extra pocket would be a little more than I should like. I have found my own most convenient, and never lost a head of game through delay in loading or reloading.

In this rough sketch A is the pocket, looking at a man in front. B shows by dotted lines where the cartridge pouch can be conveniently carried, while C and C′ show two places for the hunting knife. C′ is the more convenient, as the knife is clear of your thighs in climbing, out of the way when crawling on your stomach, and quite handy should it be required for self-defence. It is just behind the hip, though shown a little too much to the front in the sketch.

The Belt is very comfortable if about 2in. wide, with an adjusting runner. The clasp may be an ordinary buckle, or anything the sportsman fancies. On it should be carried only the knife and cartridge pouch. Every bit of weight tells when one has to climb after ibex, markhor, &c., on villanously steep ground.

The Hunting Knife is of many kinds, but something of the "Shakespeare" pattern is the best. In the sketch the knife is shown with the full dimensions marked. It is double-edged, and should have a point very sharp, so as to be easily thrust through



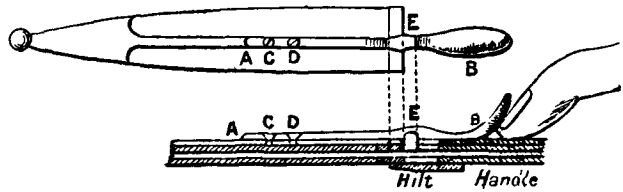
the throat of an animal. This is the proper thing to do, as it saves the throat from being slashed from ear to ear, as natives do it; and, if thrust through near the shoulders, will be more certain of reaching the jugular veins, &c.

The Sheath should have a brass mount on it, ending in a ball at

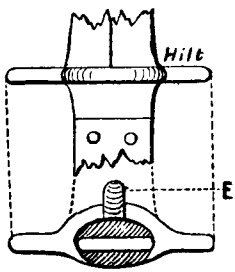
A, and running up to a collar, B, so that it may not be knocked off the sheath and lost. The leather of the underside of the sheath should project about one inch, to admit of its being securely sewn on the frog. In the sketch these three articles are shown side by side in the actual lines they will be in when put together.

The Frog is made of two pieces of leather, one, D, being doubled; straight out it will measure 11in. C is a piece $1\frac{1}{2}$in. long, sewn on to D at the dotted lines shown on its edges, just sufficient room being left between it and D to allow of the sheath being pressed through. The protruding leather of the sheath will be sewn down on D, as shown by the dotted lines just outside C. This stitching, and that of C to D, should pass through both thicknesses of D, and so form the loop for the waist-belt to pass through. As mentioned before, this knife is best carried behind the right hip. The ball at the end of the sheath saves the sportsman from accidents.

In India there is a dodge with a spring for holding the knife in the sheath. It is unnecessary if the sheath is a well-fitting leather one, but it may be wished for by some, so here is a sketch.



From A to B runs a small steel spring, held down to the sheath by two screws or rivets (CD). At E there is a notch in its lower



edge, which fits over a corresponding projection on the hilt of the knife. When the knife is pressed home into the sheath, this spring

inclines outwards when the hilt reaches B, and closes with a "click" over the hilt when the knife is home. To draw the knife, the right thumb is inserted under B, raising the spring off the hilt, upon which the fingers withdraw the knife. In the sketch of the hilt, looking along the knife from the top of the handle, the spring E is shown closed on it.

Telescopes and Binoculars.—There are many excellent patterns to be bought, but, if comfort is sought, have a pair of light aluminium binoculars, and carry them in a pocket on the outside of the left breast. They are out of the way there, handy, and comfortable. They should weigh little. A telescope is excellent for examining a herd and fixing on the best head, but its field is too small to search a hillside and look for game. It is not so portable and handy when stalking, and was abandoned by the writer as not worth its weight, and the trouble of adjusting and using. Binocular telescopes are unhandy for the sportsman himself to carry, and one person is quite enough to stalk wary game, without an assistant following at his heels. In stalking, it may be said, one person makes a "noise," two make a "bobberie," three make a "tumasha," and four—well, they generally frighten the game away before they commence the stalk at all!

Adjust the glasses very carefully on arrival at high altitudes, say 8000ft., making quite sure they are right for your vision at about quarter of a mile; then make a good mark on the inner tube, so that you can always adjust before putting them into your pocket of a morning. You will find much valuable time saved; I never carried them closed, once I learnt what *time* meant.

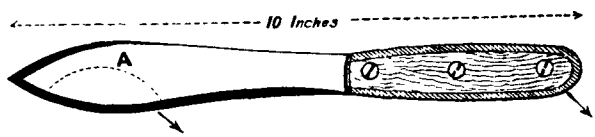
The Cartridge Bag is useful at all times, either to carry gun-cartridges when after birds, or the various items enumerated below when out with the rifle. It should be carried by the shikarie, and contain cleaning apparatus, spare pouch, reserve box of ammunition (ten rounds), skinning knives, measuring tape, small tin for luncheon, flask, pipe, and tobacco. A well-made bag of the size for 100 gun-cartridges will carry all these.

The Cleaning Apparatus may be carried in a very small leather pouch, such as one generally buys a brush and string in for sponging a gun out. In it should be a strong whipcord, about 1ft. longer than the barrel, with a loop at one end and a long lead plummet at the other. The plummet must be considerably smaller in diameter than the bore, so as to slide through easily. After

firing, put an oiled rag (which should also be in the pouch) into the loop, and pull it through the barrel two or three times; the rifle will then be clean, and capable of shooting its best again. Do this while the barrel is still warm if possible, as the fouling is then moist and soft. On your return home, after a long day, it is a great comfort to know your rifle has been cleaned, and only requires a rag through it once more before laying by for the night. It is sometimes the custom to get the shikarie to clean it with a rod and rags after the day. He is probably as tired as you, does it carelessly, and perhaps strains the action. With a strong cord and a rag that does not fit too tight, the rifle can be well and carefully cleaned on the spot. Care must be taken to use a small rag at first, and add strips until it fits the bore properly. For choice, drop the plummet in at the breech and pull out from the muzzle.

A Reserve Box of Ammunition should be one of your tin boxes, with its ten rounds in it intact. The spare pouch has been already described.

Skinning Knives.—Of these there should be two to save time. If you have only one, either you or the shikarie may be idle, or using your hunting knife for a work it never was intended to perform: bones and hard muscles are very blunting, and it is difficult to restore the razor-like edge this knife should have to be perfect. A skinning-knife, on the other hand, is better with a "wire edge"—rough like a fine saw, in fact. This is easily restored on a piece of whetstone, or any hard stone from a brook or rock. The small butcher's knife in a sheath, such as merchant seamen carry, is very



suitable for this purpose. The shape of the blade is good for its work—skinning and cutting up. About 10in. total length over handle and blade will do well. These knives may be used for many odd jobs besides skinning, such as making pegs to stretch skins, cutting small wood, &c. The heavy black line on the edge shows where it should be sharpened. In skinning, the portion of the blade included by the dotted line from A should be chiefly used, drawing the hand down and back, as shown by the arrows.

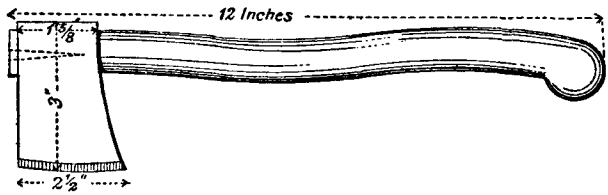
A Measuring Tape should be 6ft. long; those nickel self-winding ones are the best and handiest. They take up little room.

The Luncheon Tin should be about 7in. or 8in. long, 4in. wide, and 2in. deep. Any small box will do, but this size will carry a good deal of bread and cheese, or sandwiches, if the sportsman has a cook who can make bread.

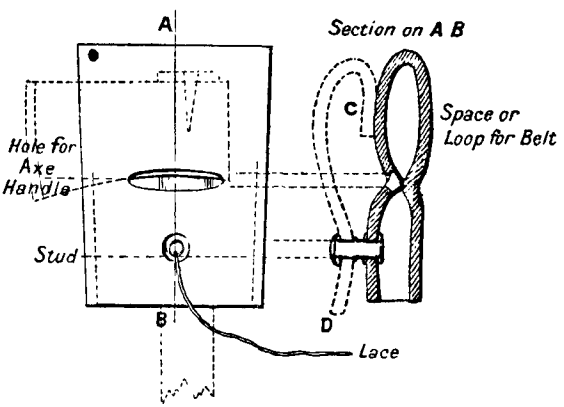
A Flask of Britannia metal does not excite the cupidity of a native as much as one of silver or electro-plate, so is more suitable.

Pipe and Tobacco may be just what you like, but a tin cover on the pipe is useful, as the wind soon blows fine, mild tobacco about.

Axe.—In addition to the cartridge bag and its contents, the shikarie should be given a small American-pattern axe to carry; it is most useful. It should be of steel, weighing ¾ to 1lb. in the head,



helved with a short handle of beech, 12in. long. With this little tool one can break up large game, get the neck severed from the body, break up the latter, clear the joints at the knees and hocks;

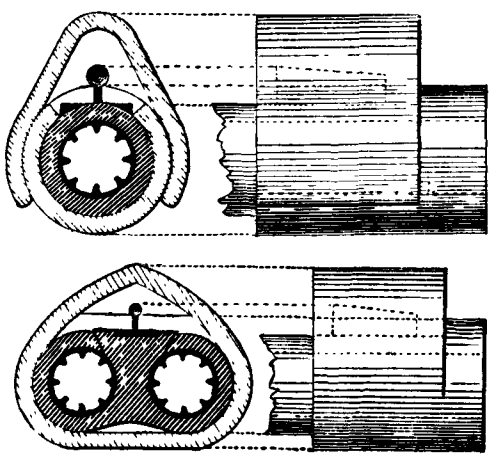


and it is always handy to cut sticks (should you lose your alpenstock you can soon get another from the trees below), to clear a path, or cut steps on steep slippery snow and ice, split up pegs for

tents or skins, and a hundred other purposes. It should be carried in a frog, and held in with a couple of turns of a slip of leather (a porpoise hide boot lace does well), and secured to the shikarie by a belt round his waist. The frog is made as in sketch. An oval hole is cut in the leather about 2in. from one end, sufficiently large to allow the axe handle to slide in. The other end then goes round over the belt, comes back to the hole, behind it, and is sewn to the front leather, as shown in the sketch by the dotted lines on either side of A. The lace can be passed over the head, then down and round the stud, and fastened with a couple of half hitches on itself. Another plan is to have a small strap sewn on the loop, as C, which passes over the head and buttons tight on the stud, as shown by the dotted lines.

A Brass Cleaning Rod, with revolving swivel on it, should be kept in camp, to give the rifle a good sponging out once a week.

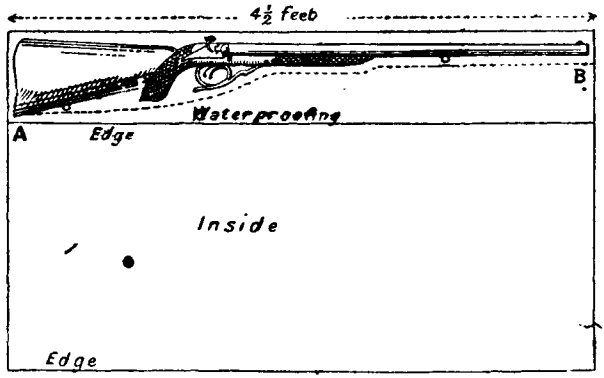
A Sight Protector should always be on the foresight of a rifle, until one is actually in the presence of game. Often and often men have had their sights knocked out of trim by their shikaries' carelessness, and not noticed it till they have missed an easy shot. These



little protectors can be made by any tinsmith out of brass, as tin solder will suffice, and brazing is not essential. The patterns of those suitable for single and double rifles are annexed. It may be stated in passing, that on no account should they cover the bore of the rifle; they might be blown off in a hurry, or cause the barrel to burst.

They are simply brass tubes, fitting tight on to the barrel, with an extension passing over the sight. The rifle may be fired with one on, but proper aim cannot be taken; it should only be left on when snap shooting, or when the shikarie has forgotten all about it when handing you the rifle, and time does not admit of its removal.

Gun-covers are very useful out shooting, as you are often driven home by wet weather coming on suddenly, and the labour of cleaning in a damp tent is no joke. There are different patterns, but the most useful are those that will take in the weapon full length. In Kashmir and elsewhere they are made of leather, which is all very well, but heavy rain soon soaks it, and covers the weapon with a mass of rust. It is better to have a waterproof cover inside the leather one, and the writer had a third cover of cotton inside the waterproof. This kept all dust and dirt out of the barrels, and, though exposed to incessant rain on many a day,



none of the weapons suffered in the least. Waterproof covers ai rather expensive, but anyone can have cheap and efficient ones made of the waterproof sheeting, 5ft. wide, which can be bought by the yard. The great thing to pay attention to is, that the seam is *under* the barrels and stock. A gun being generally carried with the guard downwards, whether on the shoulder, under the arm, or at the "trail," the rain will fall on the top, where, of course, there should be no seam. Keep the outer leather covers well greased,

To cut out a cover, proceed as follows: Buy of the waterproof about the length of your longest weapon, say 4½ft. Double the

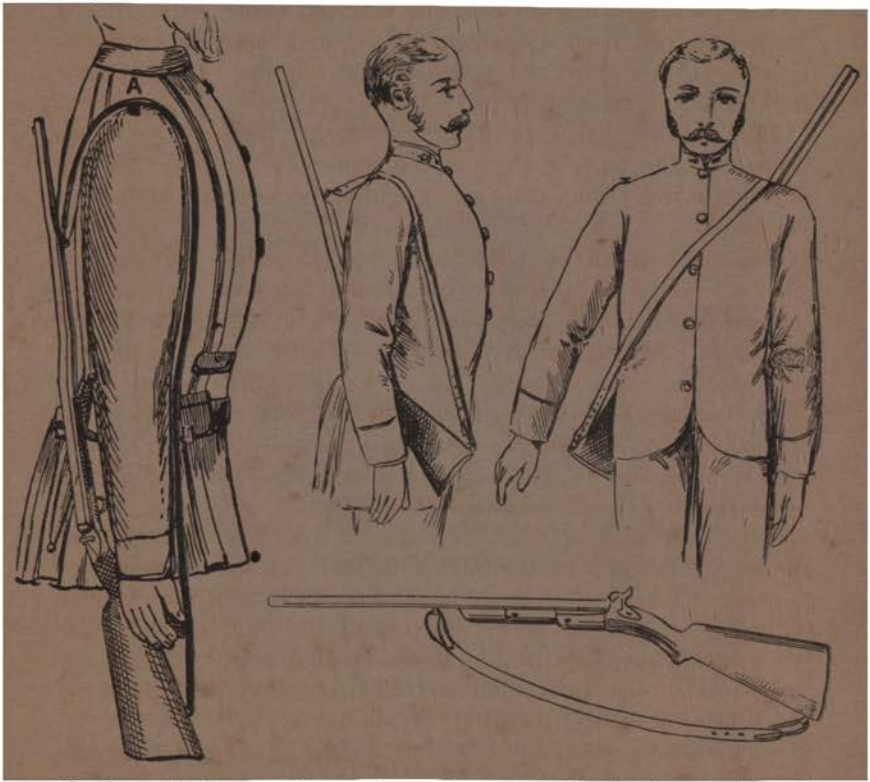
edge of the sheeting over, so that the waterproofing is outside, and the insides touching. Lay the gun on the double, as shown in the sketch, and mark with a pencil where it is to be cut, as shown by the dotted line A B. Mind you leave enough room for the hammers and trigger-guard, or there will be a difficulty in getting the cover on and off. The seam should be sewn with a narrow strip of the waterproof as "binding;" a strong needle and well-waxed pack thread will work this material easily. Out of one piece of the 5ft. cloth one can cut three gun-covers, and have a bit over for putting round anything else that requires to be kept dry, such as papers, &c.

The Sight-protectors mentioned on page 16 are very much wanted on the barrels when in the gun-cases, as rough jolting during a march often causes a foresight to be seriously injured or displaced.

Slings.—Some people advocate, some decry, these things; but they are very useful when on bad ground, for both you and your shikarie want all your hands and feet, and want a *third* hand even! They are very convenient if hooking by small swivels to barrels and stock, and the following is a good way to make use of them: Pass the right arm between the sling and rifle, sling towards the front and muzzle upwards; then let it down till the sling rests on the right shoulder. The right hand can steady it if riding, and when climbing, it will be found out of the way. Carrying a rifle hung on the back is most fatiguing; it contracts the chest, and causes all sorts of discomfort, if it does not form a source of disease. A horn button should be sewn on the edge of the shoulder, as shown at A in the sketch, to prevent the sling slipping over. T. S. K. recommends this in the *Field*, March 20, 1886, and also the following method of slinging, which is not quite the same as mine, being shorter in the sling. He says:

"The eye on the butt ought to be close to (an inch from) the toe, that on the barrel hardly an inch from the fore-end. They look ugly, but the difference in comfort is great. The adjoining outlines, one of which may be compared with that of K. C. A. J., will show what I mean. The sling may be broad where it goes over the shoulder, and secured by a round thong at each end to the eyes; at the butt the sling should have buttonholes, and the thong a cross-piece, or button, of wood or horn, to button into the holes for adjustment. There is nothing in this to clink, and the rifle

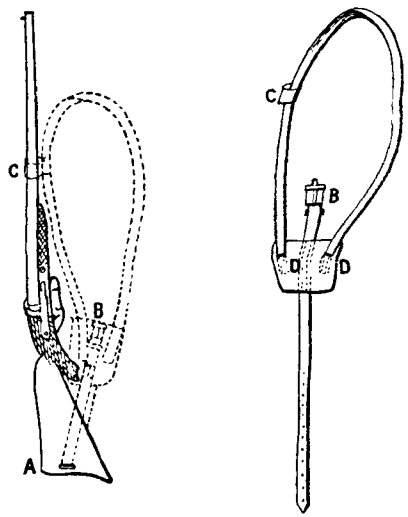
can be fired with the sling on. The way proposed by K. C. A. J. has the same fault as the Austrian sling—that it carries the rifle too low down below the hip, where it bangs about, and prevents easy climbing. A large horn button sewn on the shoulder is a good plan to prevent the sling from slipping down when carried on one shoulder and not round the neck. For difficult ground, frozen slopes, and where a stick must be used, the rifle must be carried on



the back, high up. It can be easier carried by having a piece of bent wood to fit the shoulder, attached by thongs at each end to the rifle, just as the Swiss carry their heavy loads; but this is scarcely worth while for a rifle weighing only 10lb. or 11lb."

The foregoing is very sound and practical, but it has a disadvantage on the Himalayas. One is often scrambling up hill a great deal, amongst birch and other trees, against the low hanging branches of which the muzzle is continually striking; even the

rifle I drew often came in contact with timber in the way I have described. Across no ground can a sling over the chest be comfortable; but I append another pattern, as it may be useful to anyone who does not mind pressure on the chest. The weight is better distributed than in the ordinary way, and the height of the rifle may be increased or reduced as wished, by drawing the strap



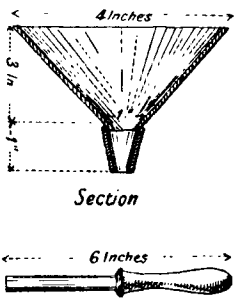
(B) up or down through the flat hole (A) in the butt. This strap is sewn on the back of (D), while a leather loop (C) is sewn on the sling, which in its turn is sewn to (D). The rifle barrels pass through (C), and if a small strap or waist-belt be worn over (D), the butt is kept quite close to the side.

I discarded this sling, after a very long trial, as the weight on the chest was too oppressive for me, but the friend who gave me a pattern had long used it with a light rifle, and considered it perfection. The single ·450 I used had no eyes for a sling, so I simply whipped one end of a strong leather strap to the barrel in front of the fore-end, and the other to the small of the butt; many a long mile I rode and clambered with that simple sling.

Oil, &c.—It may seem unnecessary, but it is just as well to mention that what is called "Rangoon oil" is the best for the barrels. Vaseline is the same oil further purified, and is equally good. For the locks and action use nothing but "watchmakers'

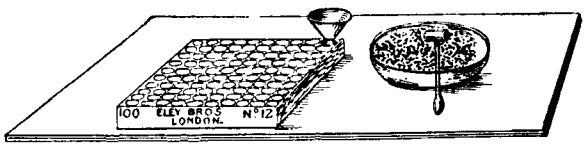
oil." This can be bought in small bottles, and a little goes a long way. The beauty of this oil is that it never freezes or clogs. It is what is used for watches and chronometers. The seams round the locks, false breech, and fore-end, should be well filled with bees-wax, to keep out moisture. To dress the stock nothing beats bear's grease (with some *elbow* ditto added!). It can be readily melted down on the camp fire, but it is better to do it gently in a pot by itself than to refine it by boiling down in water. The intestines of a bear in good condition are a mass of fine white fat. That on the outside of the body is more impure, owing to blood, &c.

Loading cartridges for the gun.—As everyone does not possess an Erskine machine, the following method is described, being rapid and soon picked up. For it you require a bowl or small box that will hold two or three pounds of powder, a powder and shot



measure, a small hand rammer (of wood), and a tin funnel. The latter should be about the size marked on the sketch—4in. wide at top, about 3in. deep, 1in. wide where tube begins, and the tube tapering, so as to fit just comfortably into a cartridge. The "rammer" is a very simple little piece of wood, just fitting loosely into a cartridge, with a comfortable handle at top. To commence work, empty two or three pounds of powder into the bowl or box; take one of the brown cardboard cases with one hundred cartridges in it, and cut the broad, flat card off the side the mouths of the cases are towards. Lay the now open frame-full on the table in front of you, place the bowl of powder close to its right edge; take the funnel in your left hand and the powder measure in your right, place the funnel in the right top cartridge and pour in a measure of powder, having scooped it up with your right. Shift the funnel to the next case to the left and pour in its measure, and so on to

the end of the row. Then work back from left to right on the next row, and, on completing that one, work again from right to left, and so on, until every case has a charge of powder in it. You will find it will take a very short time; keep hold of the funnel and measure all the time. Lay down funnel and measure and take up a handful of wads in left hand; with the finger and thumb of right hand, place one in the mouth of each case, working alternately as in putting in the powder. Take the rammer in right hand and



ram down all the wads, being careful that they start fair and square, Just look over the lot to see you have missed none and then proceed with the shot in the same way as the powder. You cannot load a case with a double charge of either powder or shot, for it will not hold it. Put in the wads over shot, pressing them down if necessary with the rammer. Take them out one by one, and turn down in the usual manner, replacing them in box, or dropping them into a bag, as you think best.

To load ball cartridges for the gun.—Mind the bullet-mould is a size smaller than the bore of your gun, *i.e.*, a 13 mould for a 12-bore gun. Be careful to cast the bullets of softish lead, such as I recommend for the Express, and, after cutting off the core or neck, carefully tap down the slight protrusion with the side of the mould, so that the bullet is uniformly spherical. Have some thin cotton rags cut into squares of 2in. a side, and well greased by insertion in the melting lubricant—wax and mutton fat mixed in the proportions of four to one. Wrap up each bullet in a patch, screwing the corners and surplus material into a tail, which cut off close to the bullet. Load the cases with your favourite charge of powder, 3 to 4drs., put a thin card and then a thick felt wad in, and then the bullet, being careful that the opening of the patch is down on the wad, if possible; it should be, if the lubricant has attached it firmly to the bullet, but if inclined to stick to the sides of the case and allow the bullet to go down alone, it is better to have the opening upwards. Crimp the case just above the bullet by passing a strong cord once round, one end of which has been

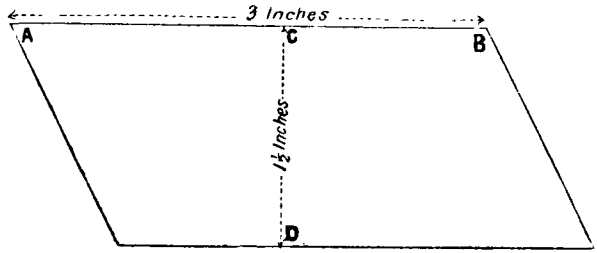
firmly fixed and the other held in the left hand; by moving the case backwards and forwards along the cord, keeping it from revolving, the choke above the bullet will be all that can be desired. The cord must pass *once* around the case, remember, and be slightly greased. *Never put a wad over the bullet, nor turn down the edge of the case.* Both are dangerous.

To load rifle cartridges is a more troublesome matter, as there are a good many things to be prepared before filling the cases.

Bullets should be cast of softish lead. Old Snider bullets are excellent, especially for the Express. Perhaps some rifle or ammunition makers will question this, but experience proves that this lead is more dangerous than anything harder. Hard bullets are too brittle, and fly into minute fragments. Those of Snider lead break up a good deal, but you will almost invariably find the *base* of the bullet intact, though opened out from the size of a sixpence to a shilling perhaps. Hence the shock is not so wasted in small and light fragments. The weight is not excessive, so that is no objection. I cannot recommend copper tubes in bullets; I tried them and found they rather prevented their expansion. When there is an open hollow left, there must be a body of air much compressed as soon as the bullet attains its maximum velocity, and this condensed air acts as a powerful disintegrator on impact with the carcase of an animal. Only once did a bullet burst prematurely, so to speak, and then it happened by hitting a bear in the elbow joint. I aimed behind the shoulder, but she was grubbing for roots, and drew her fore leg back as I fired, so received the bullet on a hard mass of bones and muscles. I do not believe any bullet smaller than Sir Samuel Baker's "Baby," could effect *much* damage after meeting with such an obstacle outside the carcase. Splinters of my little bullet penetrated the side, and I bagged the bear with a gun bullet after a short but exciting race. In any case, the tube adds weight to a bullet already heavy enough.

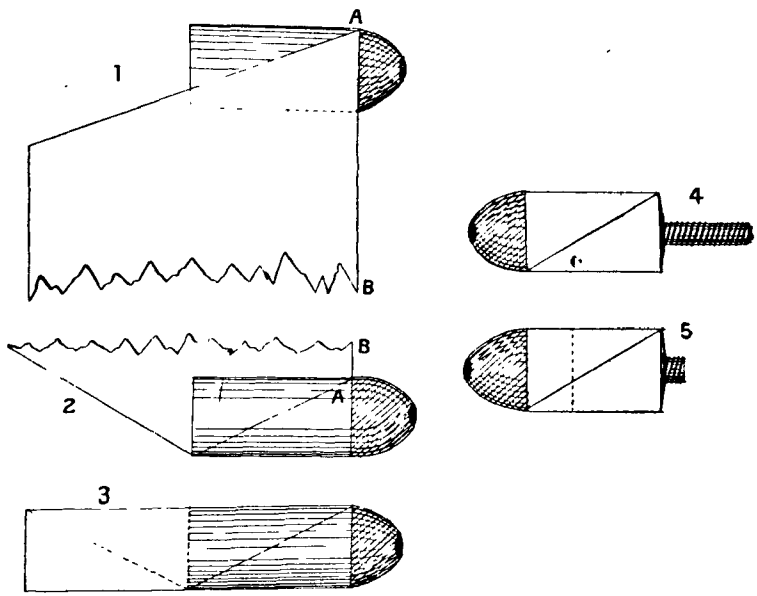
Paper bullet wrappers can be cut out of the tough paper called "Bank Note." None of the ordinary papers will do. They should be just long enough to go twice round the bullet, and to enable them to be rolled on well the ends are cut obliquely. As they are twice the circumference, they will be just six times the diameter of the bullet. Thus, for a ·500 Express, the edge AB

will be 3in. long, the width, CD, about $1\frac{1}{2}$in., to allow of plenty of stuff to twist up after wrapping round bullet. A pattern should



be cut from a piece of cardboard or tin, by which eight papers may be cut at once by doubling the material beforehand.

Now, to wrap a bullet well is not so easy as it looks. Take a paper, damp it slightly by pressing on a piece of damp blotting paper, or on the tongue, and place it on the bullet as under, being careful that the edge not only covers all the *cylinder* portion of the



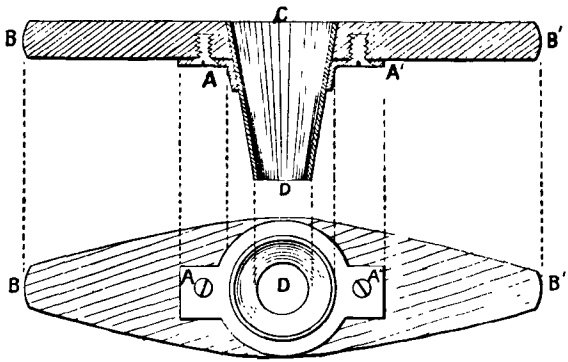
bullet, but also a little of the conical head. Keep the right forefinger on the point of the paper (A), and roll the bullet round with the fingers and thumbs. The edge B must come up quite even

with the edge A (if not, the paper was started a little crooked). Then roll on until the paper comes to an end, being careful that *all* the edge A B is even. You will then have it as 3. Change the bullet now the other way, into the left finger and thumb, and twist up the paper that is surplus at base of bullet (4). Lay it by and continue with the next. When all are wrapped, cut off most of the screw of paper with a pair of small scissors (5). Get your servant to dip each bullet now into a pot of melting wax and mutton fat, about four parts wax and one part fat. They should be covered with this mixture about as far as the dotted line in Fig. 5, but do not require dipping more than once; it makes the paper keep firm on the bullet when loading, and subsequently prevents moisture passing towards the powder; it also keeps the bullet firm in the cartridge, and dispenses with "choking" the case around it. When you have dipped all your bullets, pour the wax mixture into a flat plate to make lubricators of. It should be about one-eighth or one-sixth of an inch thick when cool, according as the cases have little or much room to spare over the powder, the great thing with rifle cartridges being to have about half the cylindrical portion of the bullet in the case, so that the nose and front half rest in the rifling, and get driven in tight at once by the shock of discharge. If the bullet is mostly imbedded in the case, it will be expanded first in the chamber, and, as it moves, will suddenly receive a great check from the rifling; the recoil or strain on the rifle is greater, and the shooting not so reliable.

It will be gathered from the above, that bullets should not fit the bore tight until fired. The best fitting are those you can drop in at the muzzle, and slide down by their own weight to the breech. The shock of discharge will expand them, and make them fit tight. The bare bullet, without the paper wrapper, is here alluded to; the wrapper does not make it fit, it prevents leading, though it does make it fit a little tighter.

To cut the lubricators out of the sheet of wax stuff, a small wad-cutter is required. It can be made out of an old case that has had the base cut off, and mouth choked to the original size of a new one. It will want a collar (AA) soldered on, so as to allow the handle (BB) to be attached. With this little tool any number of wax lubricators can be cut, as the string of them will come out at the top, between the fingers at C. They will be solid wads of course, and to make the bullet fit well, with the paper screw in the

base, a small round hole requires to be cut out of them. The tool for this can be made out of a piece of tin or brass, for it is only a



spiral cutter. The plan of it is seen by looking in the direction of the arrow. It is used when the lubricator has been placed in the case, and requires to be pressed into the centre of it, and give half a twist or turn with the finger and thumb of the right hand, and

withdrawn, when a neat round hole through the lubricator will be found. The jute wad which is over the powder will stop

the cutter and enable the small piece of wax to be withdrawn *inside* it.

Gunpowder.—For gun cartridges, Curtis and Harvey's No. 4 grain; for rifle ditto, the same makers' No. 6 grain, "extra large size for rifles."

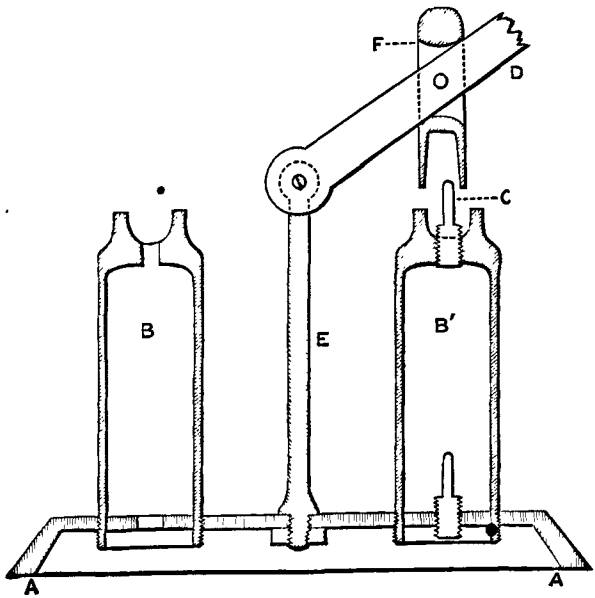
Cases, powder, and jute wads must be bought; for the latter may be substituted those cut with a punch out of cardboard, but they are not so tough or impervious to the wax.

Loading.—To measure the powder the greatest care is necessary, for the accuracy of the rifle depends greatly on the charges being uniform. Weighing the charge is too slow a process, when a hundred cases have to be loaded; but the following method is slow also, so the loader must please himself. Too much care cannot be taken; it is time well spent. Pour the powder into a bowl, scoop the measure three times through it, to fill it properly. Then take a piece of smooth wood (say a pencil), and sweep the surplus off, leaving the measure quite full and even with the brim. Pour the powder into the case gradually, tapping the latter gently on its base edge as the powder flows in; this will get the excess charge into a comparatively small space. Place a jute wad over the powder, and press it down gently with a rammer. Next press down the wax wad (lubricator); cut out the centre with the spiral cutter, place the bullet in the case, and press it in. Then take up the cartridge in right hand, with its base against the palm, rest the bullet on some soft but unyielding surface, such as the cloth on the table, and press gently down on it, so as to insure its being well home on the wax and powder. The loading is finished, and the cartridge will be found all that can be wished.

Recapping Cartridge-Cases.—With reference to this subject, it is probable that many readers would like complete details or plans, and I believe what I describe below cannot be beaten with any other machine. I have reloaded many hundreds of gun and rifle cases, and can honestly say I have been well repaid for my trouble.

I used machines of one pattern for 12 and 16 bore guns, and ·450 and ·500 bore rifles; they were all identical, except in their dimensions. On a small base A A rest two cores B B′ of such diameter that they fit pretty closely inside an empty cartridge. Both are hollow on the top, but inside the hollow of one, B′, projects a sharp steel pin C. A lever D is hinged on an upright

E between the cores, and carries a brass knob F, one side hollow, to fit over the steel pin, and the other flat, to fit down into the hollow of the other core. To extract a cap, the cartridge is put on B′, and just turned, to insure the pin penetrating the hole in the saucer that carries the cap; it then rests against the anvil. The lever D has a handle at the end (cut off in my sketch), by bearing down on which the cap is extracted. Throw cap and anvil into some small box on the table, and continue the operation with



the cases you wish to finish. Then extract the anvils from the caps, wash them in a solution of vinegar and water, to remove all verdigris and fouling, letting them steep twenty-four hours if possible. Pour off the solution, rinse them two or three times in clean water, and dry well in an oven or in the sun. They will be quite bright and fresh.

The brass rifle cartridges must be thoroughly cleansed before being recapped; I always had them *boiled* to remove all fouling, and then wiped out with a small rag and cleaning-rod by my servant. They were finally dried in the sun.

To recap, just place a case on B, put an anvil in a cap and then both into the saucer, and press home with the flat end of F,

by carrying the lever over to that side. Continue the operation with all the cases you have uncapped, and I am sure you will find the job much easier than uncapping and recapping each cartridge before passing on to the next. I generally uncapped cartridges one day, left the anvils to soak all night, dried them, and recapped next day; but I have kept cases from which the caps have been extracted till next season, then recapped them, and found them perfectly satisfactory. There is a hole at the bottom of B, to allow the gas to escape, should the cap explode, and another at the bottom of B′, in which rests a spare steel pin, to replace a breakage. It screws in and out with a pair of flat-nosed pliers.

These machines may be obtained for all the bores I have mentioned, for I have possessed and used them myself. They were made by James Dixon and Son, Sheffield.

I used Eley's caps for both theirs and Kynoch's gun cartridges; but for Eley's express rifle cases, the larger-sized rifle-case cap must be bought. I nearly lost my eye, having all my hair and eyebrows singed, by using gun-cartridge caps for ·450 cases, besides missing a fine black bear, who luckily hooked it!

Dress.

Every one will have his own ideas of the number of each article he will require, but a good general list will be attached; it is not very bulky, and will be included in the complete list of kit hereafter.

For a headdress, a grey felt helmet, double-topped, will do for travelling and shooting. It is light, a good colour, and lasts a long time. Wear a grey puggarie on it, so that, when making a stalk, you may remove the somewhat "tall hat" and wrap the puggarie round your head. It shows less, and from its form and colour, very much resembles the rocks around. When in very cold regions, a puggarie alone, 9yds. long, of Khaki cotton stuff, wrapped well over the temples and back of neck, is the most comfortable.

Flannel Shirts should be worn day and night, supplemented by a Shetland wool vest when in very cold regions.

A broad flannel belt around the waist will save one from many attacks of the stomach, owing to cold weather, chills after great exertion, &c.

Drawers need only be worn by day by those who use them

during their ordinary avocations; but at night, in cold regions, a good pair of Shetland wool will enable one to sleep sound, and not suffer from either cold or a little damp.

Woollen socks, strongly made, are the best for the feet. Have a clean pair, along with a pair of woollen drawers, in the head of your camp bed, and put them on when getting into bed at night. Your feet will be warm and dry, and when rising in the morning the change to your trousers and other socks will not chill you much.

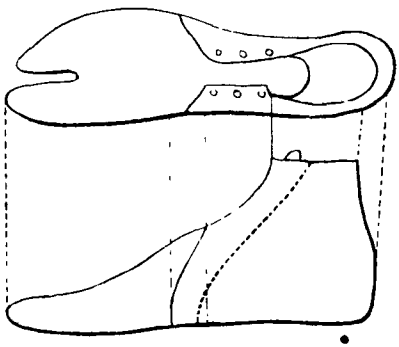
A woollen Norfolk jacket, turn-down collar, and two plaits in the waist to enable the belt to be worn comfortably, is the most suitable coat. Let it be made amply loose in the shoulders, arms, and skirts, with five buttons down the front and three pockets—first, the small cartridge pocket alluded to before; secondly, one inside the left breast, for handkerchief, &c.; third, one outside the left breast, with a good flap over it, for binoculars. At the neck, a hook and eye will keep the collar more comfortable than the button alone.

For trousers, have a pair of breeches made, but without buttons on the leg, and made as loose as knickerbockers in the seat and at the knees. They should fit pretty close to the calf, and extend down to the ankle, so as to be tucked into the socks.

Leggings are required, both to help keep the legs warm and keep snow and rubbish out of socks and shoes. Beyond doubt, the Indian *putties*, or cloth bandages, are the best things out. They afford great support to the muscles and veins, prevent the legs becoming too big (and, therefore, heavy), keep them warm, support the leg of the breeches in a comfortable position, and save the legs from the blows of falling stones or timber when clambering up a steep hillside.

An outer sock, over the woollen and inside the shoe, is a great means of saving wear and tear. Woollen ones worn alone inside grass shoes soon show holes at the heel and ball of foot, but an outer sock of either leather or canvas will materially assist to prevent this. The easiest way to have these made is to rip up an old ammunition boot that fitted well; the three pieces forming it—namely, sole, front, and back—will be good patterns to cut out by. The material may be old buck, cheetal, or other skins, with hair outwards, and three or four holes on each side over the ankle to lace them by. If they are to be worn with the grass shoe that has a string between the big and second toe, they should be divided

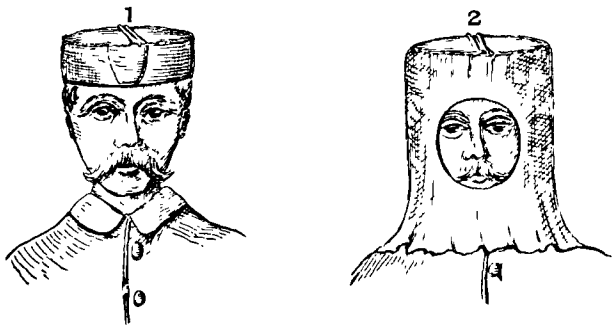
and stitched around the division. Canvas lined with flannel *may* be used, but it is too coarse in the joints, and does not pay for the time and trouble. If these leathers get hard from wet, soak them



in clean grease; the moisture on the hillsides will soon clean it off your socks if any penetrates through, for, of course, it should be applied by dipping them on the hand *into* the grease, and not by pouring it *into them!*

For the feet, the covering varies with the country and nature of the ground. Marching on good roads or paths, shooting boots are the thing, but on precipices, after ibex, thar, or markhor, something more tenacious is required. The natives make up *grass shoes*, as they are called, out of various substances—straw (particularly that of rice), the bark of a kind of tall willow, and hempen cords. Those of bark are excellent, lasting much longer than those of straw, but they are inferior to those of hemp, made by the Afridis beyond the Indus chiefly. In Lădāk shoes wear out very quickly; one pair of strong shooting boots lasted a hard-working sportsman only a fortnight! The great thing to look to is, that your men get you plenty of shoes before you reach your ground, or on the way to it; for they have a knack of having none for themselves or you, when you have been a few days in a place and wish to move on or visit some distant point for a week's trip. Of common grass shoes there should be at least thirty pairs in hand, for a pair will only last one day. Of the better materials, fewer pairs will suffice, but no one can have *too many* pairs. The writer generally had thirty pairs (either ready-made or the material for them), and never found there were too many; it was always a case of sending for more straw-rope when a man went down to the valleys below.

A Balaklava cap under the puggarie enables one to have something to pull down over one's ears when a cold wind is blowing through one, with ice and snow around. It can be kept rolled up,



as Fig. 1, under the puggarie in ordinary wear, and let down, as in Fig. 2, when one's ears are perished with the cold. Of course it is a most excellent *nightcap*. They are best knitted of grey Shetland wool.

A Cardigan jacket is most useful, and should be worn at all altitudes above 9000ft. for the sake of warmth when sitting still.

A chamois leather vest, covered with flannel and pierced with holes to assist the evaporation of perspiration, is much wanted at the higher altitudes amongst snow and ice, where the wind is piercing. The seam down the chest should be sewn up, and those over and under the right arm opened and arranged with buttons. It may seem a little more troublesome; but, once it is on, it protects the lungs more than the other plan.

Warm woollen gloves may be carried with advantage, as one's hands are often too cold to hold a rifle, until circulation has been restored by slapping the arms like a cabman. This, of course, must be done quietly, in a secluded spot, before commencing a stalk.

An ulster is wanted in camp and sleeping out under the stars. It should reach to the heels, have a hood and belt, and small wrist straps, so as to draw the sleeves tight when required.

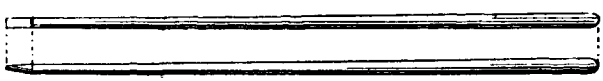
A waterproof coat you want for yourself. A fairly light and long one is best. Anything stiff and heavy is unbearable. It should be carried by your shikarie, strapped on the back of the cartridge-bag.

The colour of the outer garments depends on the ground you intend to visit. For ibex, markhor, thar, and, in fact, all game that live at high elevations, a kind of French grey, the colour of the granite rocks, is good. The natural tint of "push," the under

fur of hill game, is the thing to copy. It is much the same as the under fur of a rabbit, but not so dark, more of a grey. In jungle and forests, something darker and more of a green (or Khaki) colour is suitable. Shetland wool is just a little too light for the grey; but the writer once had a herd of ibex, filing past at twenty yards distant only, who never noticed his head with the Balaklava cap on, until one female winded him after going by. Even then she was the only one that saw him, for they all looked the other way into the gorge below.

Coloured spectacles or goggles should be worn on snow. The effect of the glare on the eyes is very severe; the natives suffering from snow-blindness are useless for two or three days perhaps, so it is as well to have a pair for each of your servants. They are cheap, and will be appreciated.

An Alpenstock is hardly part of dress, but one is not properly turned out without a stick of some kind in one's hand. They can be readily obtained in the hills, the best being from a kind of hard wood called "Rūs" in Kashmir. It looks like a "Sally," as they call it in Ireland, but the wood is very hard, like a rose tree, and takes a fine polish. On no account should they be iron tipped. In the first place they hold better if cut at the point of the



shape annexed, and make much less noise. When worn, they can be re-sharpened with the small axe or skinning knife. They should not be too long, or they will be heavy and unwieldy; about 5½ft. should suit a man of 6ft. or over, rather shorter for anyone less. The tip may be charred a little in the fire, to harden it. This pattern has been shown to the writer by probably the best native mountaineers there are in the world, who can go almost anywhere.

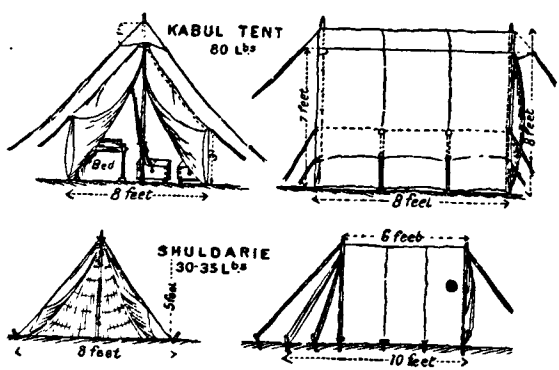
LIST OF CLOTHES.

2 Norfolk jackets.
2 pair woollen trousers.
4 flannel shirts.
2 flannel belts.
2 pairs woollen drawers.
2 Shetland woollen vests.
6 pairs woollen socks.
2 „ putties or leggings.
2 „ shooting boots.
6 pairs outer socks (leather).
1 puggerie.
1 grey helmet.
1 Balaklava cap.
1 Cardigan jacket.
1 chamois leather vest.
2 pair warm gloves.
1 ulster (with hood).
1 waterproof coat.

Camp Equipment.

This will embrace a large number of articles, but the chief are tents.

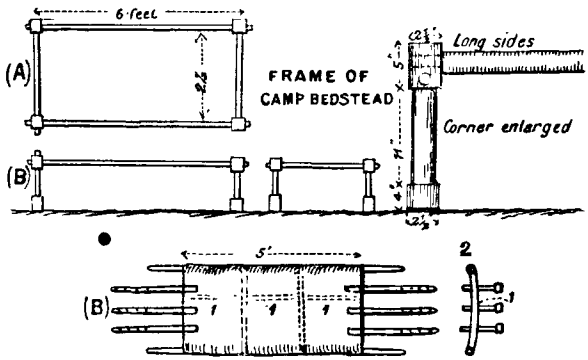
Tents.—From the last Kabul campaigns, it was pretty well learnt that a very small tent would suffice, even in an intensely hot climate, provided it had a double fly (or roof); and that it was equally suitable in a cold one. These were christened "Kabul Tents," and are, *par excellence*, the sportsman's friend, combining the advantages of being light, strong, comfortable, and easily pitched, even on bad ground. The outer cloths of each fly are "drill," the inner ordinary cotton cloth (generally "dosutie" or "two thread," from the web and woof being woven with two threads side by side). The handiest size is 8ft. by 8ft. inside, with 3ft. walls; from inside ridge to floor, 7ft. The tent-pegs are iron,



but it is nearly always possible to use wooden ones, except in Lădāk. Everything complete, tent, poles, and pegs, weigh 80lb. A second tent is required for the servants (and one's own use when making a trip from camp over the hills, to shoot on ground to which you cannot well move everything). It should have but one fly, but with the outer cloth "drill," and the two inner ones plain cotton. A convenient size is 6ft. along the ridge, 5ft. high, and 8ft. wide on the ground line. One end should have the usual pieces, opening and forming doors, while the other should be prolonged along the ground line, and rounded up to the ridge as in sketch. A small curtain is sewn all around the edges to allow of stones,

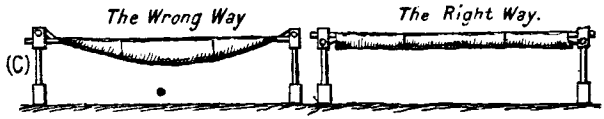
sods, or pieces of timber being laid to keep all wind out. The weight, with poles and wooden pegs, should not exceed 30lb. to 35lb. These tents may with advantage be stained Khaki-colour; often game leave a valley, having seen a conspicuous white object at the bottom or end of it, perhaps some miles away. One of Khaki-colour is much more easily concealed, as the shade is similar to the background. These two tents are sufficient; a third can always be rigged up with a large waterproof sheet, that will be hereafter alluded to.

A camp bedstead is essential, to keep one off the moist earth; but when after game and hot in its pursuit, one often dispenses with it and lies on "bracken," or any other material with which a couch can be made. It should be well finished, with four good stout legs, and strong stiff material for the sides and ends. The dimensions should be 6ft. long, 2½ft. wide, and 1ft. 8in. high. This is the frame (A). The canvas bottom is usually laced all along the ends and one side, but this is an endless source of delay



and inconvenience, as the cord gets worn with incessant hauling backwards and forwards through the holes, and then, if knotted, has to be cut or opened whenever the bed is taken to pieces. The annexed plan will be found to answer very fairly, and can be improved upon by having buckles underneath instead of permanent stitching (B 1, 1, 1). This is really a tube of canvas the width of the bed; the canvas should cross the bed and be joined by its edges and the ends underneath, where they meet in the centre, may be sewn or strapped with half-a-dozen straps and buckles, as alluded to above. Stitching will answer, however, as the canvas

cannot stretch much, and the other straps at head and foot take in all slack, over the cross pieces. No small tube is required for the long side poles to fit into; they will fit comfortably at each side of the tube, as in (B 2). It will be noticed in the sketch that the *side poles* are placed in the *upper* holes in the legs, and the *cross ones* in the *lower*; this should be insisted on, for natives, as a rule, do just the opposite, and the luckless sportsman has his head and heels in the air, with his body in a bow between them, instead of lying flat and level. A mistake cannot be made if the long poles are invariably placed in the upper holes in the legs, and the cross pieces in the lower (see sketch C). One often sits on the end of



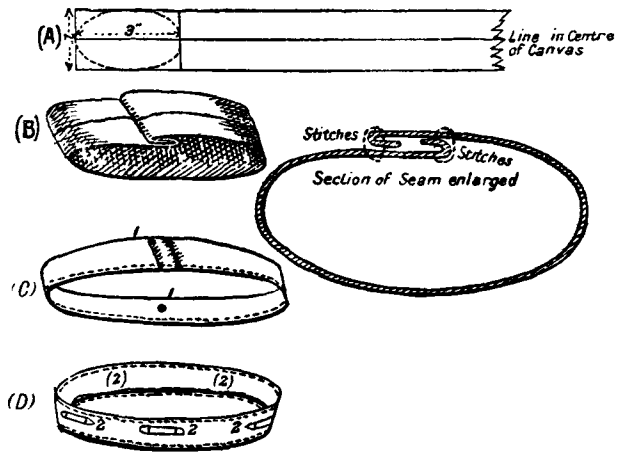
the bed, too, and this soon makes a great hollow, which is uncomfortable. By the plan recommended it occurs in a much less degree; besides which one is more off the ground, and small boxes or bundles may be kept under the bed, out of the way. The legs should be made with good big flat feet, as one often is encamped on soft and marshy soil. As a rule, they are made sharp at the bottom—the very place they should be blunt and flat. The sides and ends should be made from light, stiff wood; bamboo is too springy. When taken to pieces, the bed is easily packed. The long poles remain inside the canvas, the legs and ends being placed close to one of them, and then the whole rolled up. Secure with a couple of straps, or small pieces of rope, near each end. This bedstead and the six bamboos belonging to the two tents form one load of about 50lb.

Bedding should be all woollen, except one resai (or cotton padded quilt). There should be a couple of double blankets and the "resai;" the whole rolled up in a Wolseley's waterproof valise. The pillow of this valise will carry some of the clothes, such as a pair of woollen drawers and socks (to sleep in) a clean shirt, a pocket-handkerchief, pair of slippers or shoes, cardigan jacket, towel and washing kit, brushes, needles, and thread. It straps up well, and is most useful when camping out. At the Stores its price is 1*l.* 2*s.* 6*d.*, but it may be made from good sail canvas for about 10*s.*, and will answer well.

A large waterproof sheet is very useful, though somewhat heavy. It should be of "twill," about 9ft. by 8ft., with brass eyelets every 2ft. or so around the edges, and at the corners. The first use for it is to roll up your bedding and valise in, to insure their being quite dry in any weather on the march; the second is to double it up and lay it under your valise when sleeping on the ground; the third is to pull some of it over you when sleeping out and rain comes on; the fourth is to prop it up on sticks, and form a good tent for your men, when you are in the small shuldarie, and it is pouring with rain; you may be sure your men will thoroughly appreciate your care of them. (Poor fellows! how often have they lain down without a murmur round a wretched camp fire, with the rain falling in torrents, and striven to rest till the morning, when the sahib would be off again. Their solitary blanket is but a poor assistance to their ragged clothes, and any shelter over their heads is acceptable. They do not mind or notice draughts much, but cold rain and sleet make them miserable.) It may be used as a bath, if you prefer not having a canvas one; and if you have a skin you value stretched out drying when rain comes on, lay the sheet over it, propping it up in the centre with a stone, and it will not suffer. In fact, the waterproof sheet is always handy and useful.

Bath, basin, and bucket can be well made out of sail-canvas. It is sold by the yard, 2ft. wide, and anyone can have these articles made with it, at a very small cost. In making them, the great thing is to have all the seams double, just as they are in the sails of a ship. When new they will leak; but steep them for a couple of days, and you will have nothing to complain of. Having purchased 9yds. of this sail canvas, proceed as follows: Double 1yd. of it back on the rest, and cut out a double oval for the bottom of your bath; this will be three feet one way and 2ft. the other (A). Then measure enough canvas to go round its outer edge (about $7\frac{1}{2}$ft.), and allow 3in. extra for the seam. Join the two ends by a double seam (B). There is a line of blue along the centre of the canvas; lay a hoop of rope, the length of the large ring of canvas, around on this line, and double the canvas over it; you will then have (C) half the width of (B) but twice as thick; sew the canvas down on the rope as shown by the dotted lines on (C). This will be the side of your bath, 1ft. high. Sew in the bottom all round the edge (1, 1, in C) with a double seam, the same as the ends of the side were joined. You will then have (D). Sew on four or

five loops (2, 2, 2, D), to enable pegs to be put through to keep up the sides of the bath, if they are inclined to collapse. All the sewing must be done with a strong needle and spunyarn, or double pack-thread; no awl can be used, as it will cut the canvas, making



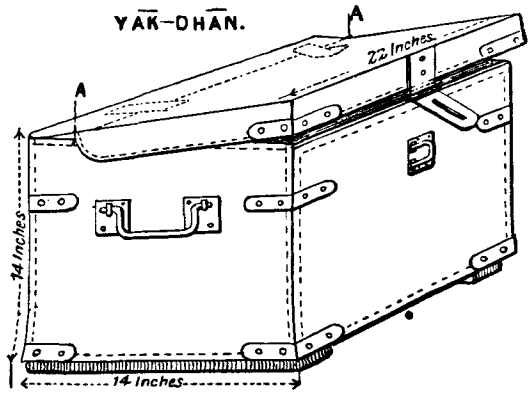
so many leaks, for the canvas can hardly expand enough to fill them, though it will close tight around the needle holes. The basin and bucket may be similarly made; single canvas will be sufficient for the former, double for the latter.

The bath would take 6ft. by 8ft. canvas	14
The basin would take 1¼ft. by 3ft.	4¼
The bucket would take 1ft. by 6ft.	7
Total	25¼

So we may say, 9yds. The material costs about 1*s.* a yard, so for 10*s.* all that will be wanted can be bought; the thread, needles, and workman's pay may be another 5*s.* A portable drinking cup may be made from a fragment of the canvas.

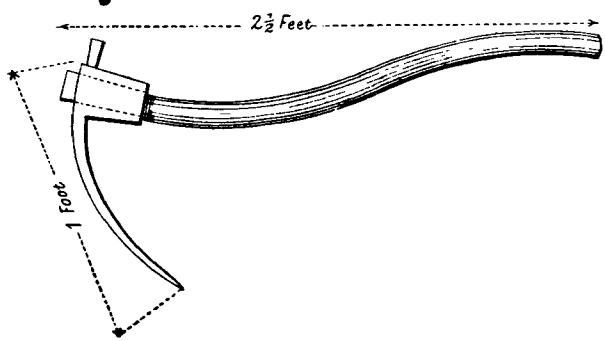
Boxes for kit should be waterproof, if possible, as heavy rains are often encountered. Good mule-trunks, about 2ft. long by 1ft. wide, and 15in. high, are suitable, owing to their size being that of a comfortable load for a coolie; they are rather expensive, so it is cheaper to buy yāk-dhāns (leather-covered boxes). The chief convenience of both these pattern boxes is the lid; it does not open at the back on hinges, but about three inches from the back, on the

top The leather covering is carried over the seam and hinges, and materially assists to keep out rain and dirt, while the box is much more handy to open in a tent In the annexed sketch the hinge-line is shown by dots from A to A. Four of these should



suffice to carry most of the kit, including stores and cooking utensils. A small piece of waterproof for each is a great blessing. A square yard will be enough, and will insure your boxes being always kept dry, for in incessant rain the contents are certain to suffer a little otherwise.

An adze is a most useful tool in camp, to replace the heavy and unwieldly tent-hammer in the first place, and do a good many jobs that that instrument could not attempt. The adze weighs about



3lb., and will drive tent pegs, dig a trench round and clear the ground for the tent, split firewood, and cut timber in the rough. Being faced with steel at the nose, it does not get much blunted by

ordinary soils. The handle slides down through the head, so can be removed for convenience of packing. It costs from three to five shillings complete.

Cooking utensils.—No matter what obstacles may be in the way, copper and brass vessels should not form part of a kit, on any account. It is almost impossible to get them re-tinned at any regular time, and even then one is not sure of the material employed. Lead is very freely used, instead of the kind of solder that is suited for tinning, and should be guarded against. The list described here will be found safe and light. "Saucepans or camp and export use, with loose handles, complete in nest of ten, 42*s*." This is the description of them in the Stores list, but the sportsman does not want so many, and may get just what he requires out of the set; four are sufficient, and may be two pint, three pint, six pint, and eight pint. In Calcutta, Messrs. Thompson (Esplanade-row, facing the Maidan) keep these articles, and probably there are others. They look like Deckchies, but are much stronger; they fit one into the other, so take up little room.

	£	*s.*	*d.*
Four iron saucepans, with lids and loose handles	0	15	0
One small frying pan, folding handle	0	3	0
One small gridiron, light wire, double.....	0	3	0
One iron kettle, hinged handle	0	4	6
One small Warren cooking pot.....	0	12	0
	1	17	6

The Warren pot is *the* cooking pot for camp life; it requires only to be known to be appreciated. The lid on the top fits all three parts, so you may have your soup making for some hours, then put the vegetables on about an hour before dinner, and finally add the meat in its compartment, about half an hour before the meal is to be ready. If the soup seems to have taken up too much room and does not allow the meat compartment in, remove some of the bones and refuse meat from the former, and it should fit all right. In addition to the foregoing cooking utensils, it is well to have six tin plates or dishes; they are sold by the dozen, and are really sheet iron, galvanised or tinned. They measure about 10in. in diameter, and 2½in. in depth, and fit into one another, forming one rather thick soup plate, as it were, when packed. Two used together make an excellent pie-dish and oven combined; two are useful as dishes to serve up in, and the remaining two are useful

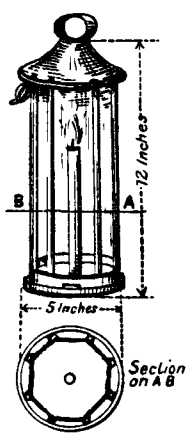
to set milk in; a pair of small iron tongs, a butcher's knife, small hatchet, pepper and salt boxes, and a small canister for cook to keep fat in, will complete the kitchen.

In the way of *plates, &c.*, a neat pattern can now be bought called "wrought iron enamelled ware." It is very tough and light, far better than the old-fashioned enamelled iron ware. At the Stores the prices are as shown against each article in the annexed list.

	s.	*d.*
One teapot (1½ pint)	2	7
Two breakfast-cups and saucers at 1*s.* 1*d.* each	2	2
Two egg-cups at 4½*d.*	0	9
Two dinner plates 9in., at 10½*d.*	1	8½
Two soup ditto, 9in., at 11*d.*	1	10
Two tumblers, ½ pint, at 7¼*d.*	1	2½
Total	10	3

In addition to these articles, there should be the following, which are not expensive: Two table knives and forks, two cheese knives, two teaspoons, two dessert spoons and forks, one pepper and salt box, two tin-openers, one steel, one bundle of skewers (iron).

A camp lamp is wanted, as a bare light soon gets blown out. Good oil is hard to obtain, and it is a dirty thing to carry, so one should take candles. The handiest are a small self-fitting ozokerit

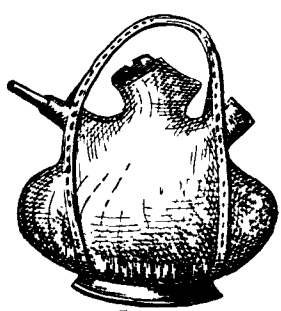


by Field and others, which run twelve to the 1lb. box. They are by far the most portable and cleanly. A lamp in which to burn them is easily made of tin, with narrow glass slides; the breaking

of one of them does not matter so much, as it would if there were four broad slides instead of eight narrow ones, as in the sketch. It should fit into a small tin case. Mind the handle and top are riveted to the frames, as the heat will often melt solder, and the whole top will come off. The bottom should have a bayonet-locking arrangement, as it is called, to enable one to put in the candle conveniently. The top frame should open on a hinge, to allow new glasses or pieces of tin to be inserted, should the others get broken. In its tin case it can be carried safely by a man with any load, or by your servant.

A water-bottle should be of vulcanite, to hold about two or three pints. It is covered with felt, which saves it from being broken, besides keeping the contents hot or cold, according to the temperature they are at when put in. Keeping the felt damp will insure a cold drink on the hottest day. Never buy an enamelled iron one; I had such an one, and found it most repulsive in the Soudan. Cold tea turned to ink, owing to the action of the tannin on the iron exposed by the enamel chipping off, and I literally drank *ink* during some thirsty night marches; it was horrible!

A leather mussuck and chargul should be procured before entering the hills; excellent ones may be ordered from Cawnpore. The first is always useful in camp, the second when marching or shooting on hot ground. The mŭssŭk need not be made of an entire



CHĂR GŪL

skin; about one-half, or a small sheepskin, is ample. The chărgŭl should hold three or four quarts of water; it is practically a large leather bottle, with a tin spout, and keeps the water inside deliciously cool by the evaporation on the outside of what soaks through the sides (see sketch).

Stores.

The following will be found most useful; they will about fill one yāk-dhān and a dozen-wine-case (claret), when the ammunition has been put into the former (100 gun and 30 rifle cartridges):

8lb. Chollet's compressed vegetables (two 4lb. cases).
12lb. jam (assorted).
5lb. cheese.
6lb. of candles (Fields' 12, in boxes).
Two dozen matches (Tändsticker)
Twelve pounds oatmeal (in 1lb. square tins).
Half a pound Liebig's extract of meat (four 2oz. pots).
6lb. Erbswürst (or consolidated soups).
14lb. sugar (moist).
2lb. maccaroni.
Two pounds Yeatman's yeast powder (in small tins). This is invaluable for making bread, puddings, &c., according to directions on wrapper on each tin.)
6lb. tea.
Six tins condensed milk.
Twelve tins cocoa and milk (mixed).
10lb. soap.
1lb. salt, mustard, and pepper.
Three bottles Worcester sauce (pints.)
One bottle ink (half pint).
6lb. bacon, in small tins.

With reference to the above list, it may be as well to state why so much of some articles is recommended.

Vegetables should be taken, as one is sometimes where none can be obtained, and a little is always so wholesome.

Oatmeal and condensed milk supply a plate of porridge under the worst circumstances.

Yeast powder has been explained in the list itself.

Erbswürst supplies one with a pint of delicious soup when no supplies can be obtained near camp, or one is unable to eat solid food through indisposition.

Cocoa and milk give a nourishing and warming beverage for breakfast at 4 a.m. when pretty nearly frozen.

Soap, always largely wanted to wash the soiled woollen clothes.

Sauce, a great improvement to all stews and pies.

Liquors.—There are none shown because they must be extra. If you want a "tot" every evening, a dozen of whisky will be a supply; but that is one coolie's load. *Tea* will be found much more comforting as a rule; but everyone does not think so, and he must estimate an extra load for every march, if he takes a fair supply of liquor.

Medicines.

Absence of the doctor is a thing one is apt to forget, and it is just as well to have a few simple remedies at hand in case of

emergency. Anything serious must involve a return to the nearest place where medical aid can be obtained; with care and judicious haste, a patient may reach it in good time. A small note-book of doses and medicines is badly wanted. About twenty-four simple and ordinary cases, with their treatment, would be invaluable. None having come into the writer's hand, he can only recommend every traveller to take the following with him. The bottles are small, and the whole lot will not occupy much room if securely packed in a case:

Perry Davis's pain killer, one small bottle.
Cockle's pills, one box.
Chlorodyne (Collis-Browne's), two bottles (2oz.)
Compound camphor liniment, one bottle (2oz.)
Rosewater (for the eyes), one bottle (2oz.)
Vaseline (for face and hands), four bottles (small).
Holloway's ointment, one pot.
Eno's fruit salt, one bottle.
Jamaica ginger essence, one bottle (1oz.)
Mustard leaves, one tin case.
Court plaister, two packets.
Soap plaister, one roll.
Lint, a small roll.
Brandy, one bottle (the best).
Small scales and weights.
Small glass measure, for drops, &c.
Quinine (1oz.)
Insect powder, four tins.
And an Ingram's enema, in case medicines fail or cannot act.

Writing Materials, Maps, &c.

One of "Lett's Royal Scribbling Diaries," with a week in an opening, interleaved with blotting paper, is the best kind for all usual notes, &c. No. 31 (foolscap size) has enough room on each day for all general information; a note-book should be used to record any special day's sport. The diary is divided with three lines on each side of the page, and may be utilised as under:

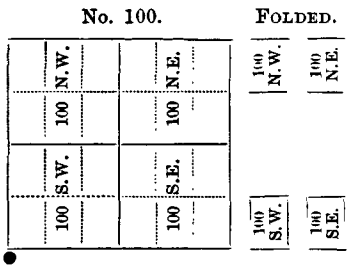
June 11, Monday.

Distance in miles from last halt or change of coolies.	Name of halt.	Total distance travelled.		R.	A.	P.
			No. of coolies employed: 12 coolies, cost.....	3	0	0
12½	Simla.	1154	Started at 6 a.m.; heavy rain; reached Simla, Lowrie's Hotel, at noon; all loads up; scenery very fine; no game about; received letters from A., B., C., D.; wrote to G., H., I., K.			

A note book is always of use in one's pocket or the shikarie's bag, as what is written down on the spot is worth a great deal more than what is written from memory.

Foreign note paper, a little blotting paper and pens will complete the list, but an *indelible pencil* will be found to possess properties it would be a pity not to take advantage of. First of all, it is handy and compact, about 4in. long, and can be used on damp or dry paper, it does not rub so much as an ordinary lead, and lastly, when short of ink for letter writing, a small piece of the lead it takes (Eagle's) will dissolve in a teaspoonful of water and supply an excellent violet liquid.

Maps of all the hills one intends to travel through are useful and interesting. Mark the camps or halts you make, and colour in the road you came with your pencil in the evening, or when you have some spare time. They will be thus corrected up to date, for they often vary considerably from what they were when surveyed. Write in the names of any places wrongly spelt or omitted, and,



in fact, make them as nearly as possible complete. They should be mounted on thin cotton cloth, in small pieces about 2ft. by 1ft. (or a quarter sheet), with the number and position of the map marked outside them, such as of map No. 100. Divide it into four pieces, and mark them on one of the sides after folding. You can then lay your hand on what you want without opening each to see if it will join on.

SUMMARY OF KIT, &c.

On person.—One Norfolk jacket, one pair trousers, one flannel shirt, one cholera belt, one pair leggings, one pair socks, one pair shooting boots, one pocket handkerchief, one pair goggles, one helmet, one puggerie, one pair gloves, one pair binoculars,

one alpenstock, one water-bottle, one cartridge-bag (containing luncheon-tin, flask, pipe, tobacco, lights, note-book), one waterproof coat; the last three to be carried by personal coolie or shikarie.

Loads.—

No. 1. Large tent, with peg-bag.
No. 2. Tent-poles and camp-bed.
No. 3. Bedding (see below).
No. 4. Box (see below).
No. 5. Box (see below).
No. 6. Box (see below).
No. 7. Box (see below).
No. 8. Small tent, mŭssŭck, bath, basin, bucket, adze, lamp.
No. 9. Servants' kit, chărgŭl.
No. 10. Gun-cases (choose a good man for this load, though light).
No. 11. Stores (in addition to No. 7 box).

No. 3 *Bedding.*—Valise, two double blankets, one resai, one waterproof sheet, one ulster, one pair woollen drawers, one pair socks, one flannel shirt, two pocket handkerchiefs, one pair slippers, one Cardigan jacket, one towel and washing kit, one pair brushes, one clothes-brush, needles and thread, and, inside blankets when rolling up, diary and writing-case.

No. 4 *Box.*—100 gun cartridges, 30 to 40 rifle ditto, one flannel shirt, one cholera belt, one pair woollen drawers, one woollen jersey, two pair socks, one Norfolk jacket, one pair trousers, one pair leggings, one pair shooting boots, three pair outer socks, three pocket handkerchiefs, bundle mending materials, &c. (needles, thread, thimble, scissors, buttons, spare laces).

No. 5 *Box.*—100 gun cartridges, 30 to 40 rifle ditto, one flannel shirt, one jersey, two pair socks, three pair outer socks, one pair gloves, one chamois leather vest, three pocket handkerchiefs, medicines, axe, gun-covers, pouches, skinning knives, hunting knife, belts, measuring tape, 1lb. alum, one tin arsenical soap.

No. 6 *Box.*—100 gun cartridges, 30 to 40 rifle ditto, four cooking pots (complete), one gridiron, one frying-pan, one kettle, one Warren cooking pot, six tin dishes, one pair tongs, one butcher's knife, one hatchet, one pepper and salt box, one cannister, one teapot, two cups and saucers, two egg-cups, two dinner-plates, two soup plates, two tumblers, two table knives, two table forks, two cheese knives, two teaspoons, two dessert spoons, one pepper and salt castor, one steel, one bundle iron skewers, two tin-openers. (N.B. The cartridges in this box to be used first.)

No. 7 *Box.*—100 gun cartridges, 30 to 40 rifle ditto, 4lb. vegetables, 6lb. jam, 2lb. cheese, 2lb. candles, one dozen boxes

matches, 6lb. oatmeal, 1lb. Yeatman's yeast powder, 2lb. erbswürst, 7lb. sugar, 2lb. tea, one bottle sauce, 1lb. salt and pepper, 2lb. soap, one bottle ink, ½lb. Liebig's extract of meat, two tins condensed milk, four tins cocoa and milk, one tin bacon—altogether about 55lb. contents.

No. 11 *Case.*—Balance of stores, about 60lb.

Removing and Drying Skins, &c.

It is most essential to give personal supervision to the removal of skins from heads and carcases, as well as to their subsequent stretching and drying. Not one shikarie in a hundred will do them as they require to be done, to ensure their being set up properly by some well-known taxidermist subsequently. I am sure some general information will be of use to anyone commencing a tour through the hills, even if not bent on sport, for he may pick up some bird or animal, the skin of which he wishes to preserve as a temporary measure until it can be sent home or tanned. For a full treatise on the art, I recommend Rowland Ward's "The Sportsman's Handbook," and shall endeavour to give such hints here as will enable you to save skins from destruction.

As to birds, the best way to skin them is by making an incision from the side of the abdomen up to the shoulder, under the wing; by working out the rump and body you can get to the legs, clearing them down to the knee joints from the hips, where they should be divided. Then work to the wings, extracting each as far as the last joint, remove all meat, &c., and divide from the trunk at the shoulder, *not at the last joint.* Then work down the neck to the head, off which the skin should be cleared to the base of the mandibles. Clear the interior of the skull, remove tongue and palate, after having separated the head from the neck, and your skin is ready for preserving.

Working back, anoint the inside of the skull, as well as the exterior, and all the skin, with arsenical soap; be careful that the leg and wing bones are quite free from meat. Place rolls of tow or cotton wool in each limb, with some insect powder sprinkled through, and turn the skin right side out again. Stuff the body to the natural size, especially the neck; there should be a roll of tow inside the latter the exact length of that of the specimen, so that the skin will dry correctly. Dust the feathers well with

insect powder, and when quite dry (in about three days) roll up neatly in paper, turning down and pinning the ends, so that the insect powder and its noxious fumes may remain around the bird.

If the powder is not sufficient, add some camphor, or you will find a nasty, hairy weevil amongst the feathers later on; the latter will be quite spoilt. It is well to overhaul and air the specimens on every spare dry day, carefully redusting them with the powder. Always allow plenty of room in a box for bird skins, with no weight on top of them.

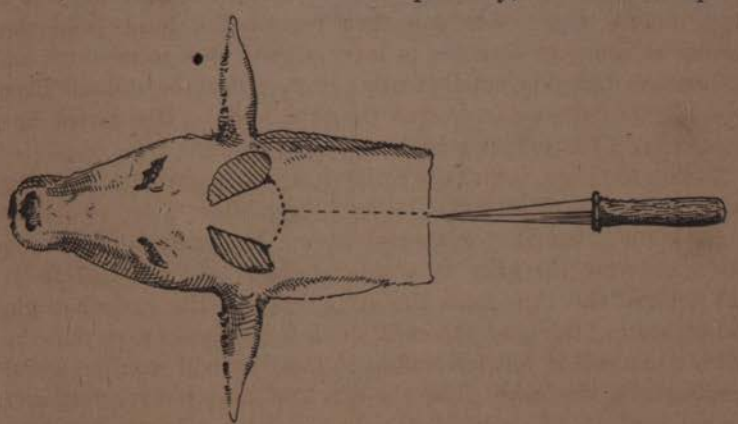
When an animal falls to the rifle, the shikarie usually wishes to "hallal" it (cut its throat), and does so immediately under the angle of the jaw-bone, slashing it from ear to ear. Everyone of the heads so treated is useless for stuffing, there being no neck left on which to mount them, and as a matter of fact the object of the "hallal" is lost, for the life blood rarely flows from such a wound, neither veins nor arteries being severed. However, that seems to be nobody's business; as long as there is a gash somewhere in the throat the meat is clean, provided life was in the animal when it was made.

Every native trusted to "hallal" good heads must be shown how to do so correctly; the hunting knife, not the *skinning* ditto, must be used, and plunged *into* the throat from one side, just in front of the shoulder, where the neck ends; there the veins and arteries come out from the trunk, and must be severed if the knife has a keen double edge. You can then remove the head from the carcase at sufficient distance to leave a good neck to mount it on, and remove the skin subsequently. A is where the shikarie likes to slash, B is where the prod or thrust should be, the dotted line being a good one to follow in detaching the head.

To skin the head, commence by inserting the point of the hunting knife under the skin on the back of the neck, and cut up nearly to the horns; then diverge to each horn. Next take the skinning knife, separate the skin from around their base very carefully, and remove the skin from the skull, cutting the ears through, and separating the nose and cheeks well in to the bone, so that the full interior will be left for stuffing. The nose will require careful opening from the inside; also the ears and lips; remove flesh and fat, rub in plenty of arsenical soap, dust in powdered alum, put some coarse stuffing into the head inside out, after sewing up the seam with a few stitches to keep the skin straight, and dry in the shade.

I used wood-ashes a good deal for preserving, the great object being to know that they are quite *cold and dry* before applying to

the skins. If hot, good-bye to your skins, for they will be burnt; if wet, the salts have been absorbed probably, and not much pre-

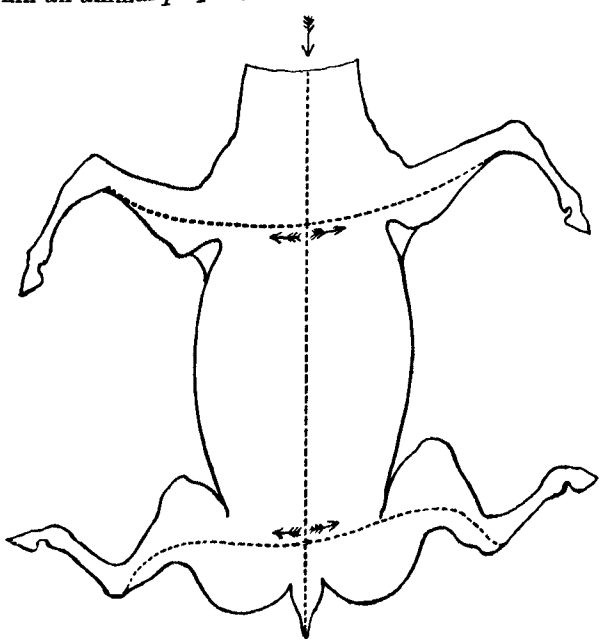


servative power remains in them, besides which they do not absorb the grease and dampness of the skin.

The horns will get loose when dry, but may require separating from the core at the base; kerosine oil is the best thing to preserve them from ravages by weevils, &c., but it blackens them too much to be natural, and I prefer pouring in turpentine, or corrosive sublimate dissolved in rain water.

Clean the skull carefully, scraping off all flesh, and remove and clean the lower jaw; clear out the brain by the hole where the spinal cord entered; dry in the shade with some ashes sprinkled over, and when dry replace the lower jaw and horns, tie all well together in their places, attach a numbered label and a similar one to the skin belonging to them; you will be able to have them mounted correctly by this means of identification, otherwise you may be horrified to find a *thar* head-skin on an *ibex* skull when you visit the ancestral mansion where your trophies have accumulated after passing through some stuffer's hand, to whom the identity of the animals was unknown!

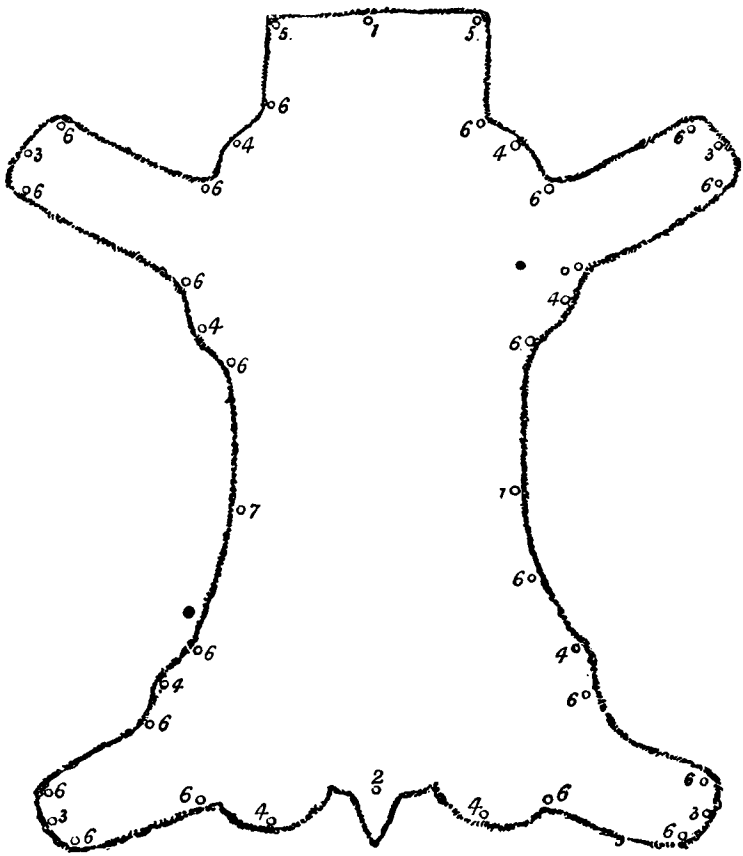
To skin an animal *properly* is not quite such a simple process as



is generally thought; you must attend to it, no matter whether you intend to have it stuffed or simply tanned, for most natives

will make incisions in the wrong places, and it will be quite out of shape when dried.

Begin by inserting the sharp-pointed hunting-knife under the skin of the throat, and run it in a straight line down to the vent, along the belly. Next insert at the brisket, opposite the centre of the inside of foreleg, run up the inside until close to the knee,



BEAR SKIN.

then work round behind that joint, and run along the back of the leg to the pastern joint. Do the same with the hind leg, working round behind the hock and down to the pastern. Having cleared the leg, with the skinning-knife, separate the bones at the pastern joints, subsequently cutting them off if you prefer, or clearing them

of bones and meat right into the foot, especially in the case of bears; the latter will not dry well unless cleared of everything down to the claws. I generally left the hoofs on markhor and ibex until they were made up on rugs, &c., but they were very much in the way about the rooms, and made an awful clatter when tripped over!

Having removed the skin, have it spread out to enable all the fat, meat, and small feet-bones to be removed. Then proceed to peg out.

Commence by having the skin drawn on to the spot it is to be pegged out, so that the hair will get into its proper sit as it passes over the space. Have plenty of thin, sharp pegs ready; drive one of them in centre of neck, then one in centre of rump at root of tail. Be quite sure the skin is not over-stretched, because, though you may make it bigger, the hair will become much thinner on the larger surface. Next have a peg driven through each foot, so as to splay the legs out at a suitable angle; have a good look at them from both ends of the skin, so that you may be sure they are alike. Then peg out the loose skin on each side of each leg, the neck, and feet, and then insert pegs about 4in. apart all round, to stretch quite even. Rub in a good quantity of cold wood-ashes, after painting the feet with arsenical soap; cover with a waterproof-sheet at night or when rain comes on, and it will dry well in a couple of days. Peg out in the shade, but on dry, airy ground; *on no account in the sun*, as the grease will melt into and spoil the skin for ever. Appended is a rough sketch of a bear skin pegged out, with numbers to show the order of insertion of the most important pegs. Too much pains cannot be taken with this portion of the sportsman's work if he has any wish to have a good show of skins on return from his trip.

General Notes.

Bread cannot be bought in the interior of the hills, and it is wonderful how difficult it is to get any cook to make it for you. As a matter of fact, anyone can make passable buns or small loaves, if he only tries; the great thing is to use baking or yeast powder, and not carbonate of soda. There is a difference between them; for the former will make bread light and white, while the latter will make it leathery and yellow. Servants will often say that they have no oven; but that is soon made. There are two

useful patterns, the first being to dig a small deep hole in the ground, wider at the bottom than top; plaster it round with clay, and light a fire in it; keep up the latter until the pit has become quite red-hot round the sides. Then have the ashes and embers removed, and lay your loaves at the bottom, cover the mouth with a flat stone, and keep the air out by putting some clay around it. The bread will be from half to one hour baking, according to the size and heat of the oven; practice will enable one to judge the time. The other oven is made by stones above ground, covered with earth and used in the same way. Excellent cakes, pastry and bread can be turned out in these rough contrivances. For pastry one is often at a loss for butter; a good cook will produce a fine white fat from the interior of any sheep, with which he can make up puffs, cakes, or pastry. It is a very acceptable change from bread alone, although it does not read as a very choice preparation.

Bridges.—Many varieties will be met with, including suspension, pine-log, grass-rope, brushwood-rope, and raw-hide. As for the word *bridge* in the mountains, it means a way of crossing a river above the water, quite regardless of the manner in which it is accomplished. You may ride, walk, crawl, or be slung over; still, the means are all bridges. The suspension require no remark, neither do the pine-log, as they are usually well built on good foundations; but the grass-rope are very insecure things to look at, and at the end of the season, when the ropes have pretty well rotted, much care is required that too great a strain is not thrown on them. The loads should be cut down, and two or more trips made by each man, till all the baggage is safe across. Over these and the brushwood-rope, grass shoes or stocking feet should be the way for a sportsman to make the passage; shooting boots are too hard and slippery. The brushwood-rope are made of a kind of four-plait, three or four such ropes at bottom to form the footpath, and other two or three on each side to form supports; the latter are joined to the centre by stray binders. The whole bridge is a thing of discomfort, for the ends of the sticks catch one's clothes and delay one in a nasty swaying, jumpy spot, perhaps over the centre of a mighty torrent. A man before one will make the passage much easier The last kind, the raw-hide, are peculiar, for they consist of a single rope about as thick as four fingers, stretched across a gorge; on it travels a large wooden fork, with a raw-hide loop made fast to each of the prongs. A light line extends to either

bank from this contrivance, enabling it to be pulled backwards and forwards. A leg is placed in each loop, the fork gripped with the hands, and the passenger despatched with a shove along the rope. He goes down with a rush, and is slowly pulled up on the other side by men on the bank. The rope is very elastic, and the sensation must very much resemble what one would experience if danced up and down at the end of a piece of indiarubber, like a child's toy! It is undoubtedly strong, but it *looks* awfully weak; and dancing over a torrent in the Himalayas is not exactly the same thing as driving across Westminster Bridge in a brougham! There is no fear of an accident if the passengers do not let go the fork. The smell of the grease burning from the friction is not agreeable, I may add.

Cookery.—With the Warren pot a good deal may be done, but the pie-dishes deserve notice, as they provide such an excellent savoury repast. To commence one, take a dish and cover it with dough all over the inside and edges. Then lay in the ingredients, such as cut-up chikor, pheasants, fowls, venison, vegetables, sauce, &c., and put another layer of dough over the lot, letting it come well down on the edges, which should be wetted to make them adhere to each other. Then, turn a second dish upside down, and lay it on the first, pressing well down. Run a small strip of dough all around the seam to close it well. Bake by laying in the fire ashes, with some red embers on the top. It will take about half to three-quarters of an hour to bake. When cooked, remove the top tin and cut away. All the fragrance of the ingredients will be retained and the meats tender.

Fires do not alarm game much, if not too exposed. Even markhor have come within sixty yards of the writer and his men round a fire under a rock, and remained watching for some time. Finally they clattered away, the darkness being too much for the game or sights to be visible to him, though the shikarie declared there was a good head amongst the former. Next morning some were seen from the rock, and during the day a herd trooped past, but the writer was elsewhere then.

Fore-sights have been much written about and discussed. Probably the most suitable is what is here described. The end of the bead, towards the breach, is *counter-sunk* with a small drill. Consequently the bead is always black, the bluing inside the countersinking remaining untouched after months of wear and tear. Of

course this hollow may be filled with red or other sealing wax if the sportsman wants a bright sight; but the plain one described has been found excellent against everything, from a black bear to a piece of white paper. How it came to the writer's knowledge was by the silver bead-end falling out from the fore-sight of a rifle he had, and the sight so altered becoming much more distinct under all circumstances.

Fruits.—Jogging along the road a look-out should be kept for wild fruits. The following may be found in many places: Red and white raspberries; black and red currants; strawberries; gooseberries; rhubarb; black cherries, growing in clusters like the flower of the horse-chestnut. From the gooseberries excellent "fool" may be made, but with rhubarb one should be moderate at first, as it acts rather as a purgative on some people.

Hollows of express bullets generally have a copper tube pressed in tight; it is a fact that nothing is required there. The air becomes compressed by the velocity of the passage of the projectile, and blows up the bullet more effectually than the tube on entering an animal. The air inside the tube is of the ordinary atmospheric pressure, or a very little more if the tube fitted tight in the lead during the latter part of its passage into the bullet; that in the hollow left open must have the pressure of several atmospheres when its velocity is about 1500 to 2000ft. a second. The accuracy of the rifle has been improved, so far as the writer's experience has gone, with both a ·450 and ·500 Express, by leaving the hollow open.

Ice has often to be crossed when after ibex, crossing passes, &c., and is not so formidable as it looks. Small steps are carefully cut by a man in advance, and step by step one can follow him. This is where an axe is so useful, for with an alpenstock the holes are not so well or quickly cut.

Noises frighten game, but vary in their power. Some will make them start and be on the alert, while others will make them rush headlong down (or up) almost perpendicular rocks. Among the first the report of a gun or rifle comes; game get puzzled by the echoes, and, until they see the smoke or sportsman, start about restlessly, but do not know from what direction to expect danger. A whistle will make them spring up and listen, but the sound of the human voice, or any movement they can identify with man, will send them off at a gallop. At night round the camp fire the

noise seems smothered by the glare—if such an expression may be used—and game will approach close, deeming the darkness their own security.

Passes have to be crossed, and on such occasions goggles should be worn, and the face smeared with vaseline. It sounds nasty, but if you are not prepared you will find your nose and lips raw, and all your face blazing and cracking after you descend. The servants will probably suffer from snow-blindness, so coloured goggles should be given them.

Servants.—I recommend only one, a Khidmutghar; any more are simply encumbrances. He should be a good cook, healthy and strong, and experienced at this work, if possible. Give him warm clothes, some waterproof sheeting, goggles, woollen socks, putties, and a fair allowance of baggage. Hire local men for gun-carriers, letter-carriers, and shikaries. They are quite reliable.

Shikaries cannot be depended on. A good one with Smith last year will be utterly worthless with Jones this. You may be recommended a "treasure," and find him just the contrary. He may have you wasting valuable time on all sorts of empty ground, and finally have you fagging away for some distant spot where he should have taken you at first. The amount of pay does not seem to be the cause, for many are offered large sums if they assist in obtaining a large bag; neither does a high daily remuneration obtain success. At most villages men may be found who are well acquainted with the neighbouring hills, and with them game can be found; but all stalking must be carried out by the sportsman's orders, as they have little experience. They will take you where you direct, and guide you safe over the worst ground, but you will have to make your own plans for circumventing the game. This is where the real shikarie comes in; for, being long accustomed to the different kinds of game, their habits and localities, he can very quickly, and generally correctly, decide on the best way of getting to him; still, he is such a *rara avis* that the writer has generally been content with local men.

Tea forms an important item in the sportsman's fare, and is welcome both hot and cold, according to the temperature one is in. To make it properly is not understood by natives, and the two following ways are the best the writer has met with. That for cold tea appeared either in the *Asian* or the *Field* some years ago. To make hot tea: Boil the water in the kettle and pour half a

tea-cupful into the teapot; put on the cosy and let it warm up thoroughly. Then pour out the water, put in the tea, and put the cosy on again, letting it remain so for five minutes. Then pour in the boiling water, let it draw for five minutes, and you will have a cup of tea of delicious fragrance. The tea-leaves get softened by the steaming at first, and so part with all their best quality of flavours within five minutes of the water having been poured over them. To make *cold tea*, place the tea in a bottle, pour in the amount of cold water you wish to have as tea, and let it remain for three or four hours; then pour it off into your water bottle, and throw away the leaves. If this does not seem strong enough, the soaking may be allowed to go on all night, and the tea poured off in the morning before starting. Hot water cannot make good cold tea; it draws out too much of the rank astringent properties of the leaves.

Time is of so much importance that expense must not be spared in making marches as rapidly as possible. Out of six months' leave, between one and two are spent travelling; and it is not interesting work when passing along plains or bare hills destitute of game. Where any of the latter exists, either it is worth halting for, or should be ignored and passed by. The gun may be kept handy to assist the larder, but attention should be paid to the season, and no winged game killed till the latter months.

Vegetables may be obtained at many places, but some districts are very bad in supplies, and recourse must then be had to the compressed kind. Potatoes, onions, cucumbers, spinach, haricot beans, and pumpkins may be obtained from time to time. In some places the young shoots of a particular fern are a very good substitute; they much resemble asparagus, and should be cooked in a similar way, by gentle simmering over the fire, and served with white sauce.

Weather is the great friend or enemy to the sportsman's efforts. If wet and showery, probably no amount of work will pay; but if fine and bracing, no day will be too long, no work too hard. From April to June, the days are often mild and showery in the lower hills. From the time the rains commence till even the end of September it is rain and fog, fog and rain, and camp-life is very trying. But when the rains cease, so bright and crisp a season comes that everything looks inviting, except the enormous height of all herbage, which conceals game on even open ground. On

this account (coupled with the snows being higher, and game therefore more dispersed), the first two months are better; and if the season be dry and very cold, good sport may be hoped for.

Wind is a thing you must pay attention to, and carefully prevent game getting to leeward of you if possible. Bears in particular depend on smell more than any other sense to warn them of approaching danger. Markhor and ibex, too, do not depend on sight alone; it is acute, but they cannot distinguish a motionless object sometimes. A markhor looked at the writer and his rifle-carrier for a considerable time and never recognised them, though he was scanning the whole hillside and they were lying exposed within 350 yards of him. The ibex filing past were alluded to before. Evidently smell has a good deal to do with most game's knowledge of danger. Among crags and gorges the way wind varies is incredible; sometimes you are sure you have the wind of the game, and are well to leeward of him. You commence your stalk, and on arrival at the point you hope to get your shot from, you find the wind has veered round in some extraordinary way, and is blowing straight to the game. You retire again, and find on examination that the game has vanished, or is staring at you from some distant and probably inaccessible point.

Conclusion.

These notes have been completed as far as lay in the writer's power. One important point has been avoided, *expense*, on account of the enormous difference in the sums expended by different men over the same ground. It may be laid down for certain that the actual travelling, living, pay, and feeding of servants, shikaries, messengers, and coolies, and all other incidental expenses, will never exceed Rs. 200 per mensem, if due care is taken of the "dibs," and no one trusted to buy or pay for things on the sportsman's account. Pay for everything yourself, and keep your money under your own lock and key; you may be quite sure that the people will be better dealt with and will deal better with you, than can possibly be the case if you entrust this duty to the best servant in the land.

SHOOTING YARNS.

INTRODUCTION.

THE tales that follow are simply successful days and others culled from my diaries and notebooks, as specimens of what anyone may expect in Northern India. I never went in for howdah or jungle shooting, because my means were small and opportunities rare, but any who want tales of that kind may read with advantage the various works by Forsyth, Saunderson, Kinloch, and Sterndale. For Himalayan shooting in particular, read Kinloch's, Baldwin's, and Ward's; they are all most interesting.

I divided my tales into two series; one with the ·450 single, and the other with the ·500 double Express, so that there may be some comparison of the powers of the two bores by anyone who wishes to satisfy himself as to which he prefers. As I have already stated on page 3, I would now choose a double ·450 magnum Express, provided my means would admit of such a weapon from our best makers.

CHAPTER I.

BLACK BUCK.

By whom was the rifle made? I regret that it would be a bit of a puff for me to give that information, but I can assure my readers it was by one of our best-known makers, and was chosen by our musketry instructor—a well-trained shot, from whose hands it passed into mine. It was only a single-barrel, and therefore not suitable for tigers and panthers; but for all the other game met with in Northern India it was quite sufficient. As a matter of fact, the musketry instructor killed a tiger or two with it; but then he was in a howdah on an elephant, and had a double gun by his side loaded with ball, which is a most effective weapon on those occasions. I often wished it had been a double, but I cannot recall any instance in which I lost a good head or skin owing to its being a single. It was so accurate that it was always a feeling of certainty that I should kill or miss. I could not blame the rifle when the latter occurred, but always myself, and I am sure that the greatest charm of sport can only be enjoyed when you feel that all else is perfect, and only yourself doubtful. My yarns are not intended to do more than fill up some of the odd hours for those who love the sport and like a tale about it.

The dear old weapon fired 4½drs. of powder and was sighted point-blank up to 150 yards. There was one flap sight marked 200, and you had to exercise your judgment as to which was correct, whether on the level plains, the sweltering oorial ground, or the grand corries and ravines of the Himalayas. On the first there was not much trouble in deciding correctly, after a certain amount of practice, but on the second and third so many difficulties presented themselves that, even after mature deliberation, you often decided wrongly. When you are on one side of a corrie, buried in deep shadows of early morn, and the game is opposite, a sad longing for a rifle point-blank up to 300 yards will arise. The distance looks about 100, but you must allow for the mistiness of the air, the bad light, the respective colours of the game and background, the respective positions of the former and yourself—if above or below—and the fact that the foresight is a big black ball in such a light, with a very ill-defined contour. Happy is the man who can count few misses under these circumstances, but I have yet to meet him; the results generally acknowledged have confirmed the saying that "the best may err."

For a wily blackbuck a light ·450 is very handy; and with this slung on one's shoulder, and a steady pony that will stand fire under one, there

can be no excuse for not enjoying sport. The shooting may be bad as far as the man is concerned, but the scenes and their study will well repay even the proverbial duffer. It is curious how differently the blackbuck is scattered. In some parts you will see many herds every day, each numbering some dozen good bucks, and hundreds of youngsters and does; in others you will find two or three bucks only and a dozen does, perhaps twice in the day, but it is amongst these that the best heads are found. Probably where bucks are numerous they are more sought after, as it certainly taxes a man's patience to wander all day and see but one or two small herds that are extra wary, and the general head- or pot-hunter would vote it not worth the candle. But we are not all such, and many a tale can be told where a good buck has been long sought after before he fell to the lucky pursuer. I don't think the old ·450 ever killed a large one; about 21½in. was the best, and even that it did not kill, only wounded badly, and enabled another to finish off.

We were on the march down country, and near the confines of the Punjab, when the idea struck two of us that if we could obtain three days' leave, we might reach the edge of a district famous for the length of horn of its buck. Many of 25in. had we seen on the walls of the Deputy-Commissioner and others, whose duties took them every cold weather through those favoured parts, and many were the jokes cracked as to the length of stay the said officials had made in the very best parts, owing to a great excess of business there! Somehow, no one else seemed to find the big heads so often, and even the "silver bullet" was hinted at sometimes. We determined we would have a try, and started for a fifty-mile drive in the usual gharrie, drawn by the usual lean and miserable tattoos, who were driven wildly from stage to stage, and then led back reeking, to await the arrival of the next traveller. It was always so on that road, and the reason easily discovered; few passengers meant small receipts, and the Dâk Company was always near bankruptcy.

We had our dinner in an old serai and then started, with our kit, in two pony ekkas. These contain no real springs in any part of their frames; there are sundry bamboo and split-wood lattice girders about them, but I never could find springs; and when you travel along unmade roads, to which Irish boreens would be Rotten Rows, you are certain to feel every bone in your body dislocated, every muscle lacerated, perhaps a tooth dislodged, and your temper ruffled! Twelve miles and a half of this torture we had in the dark, and though we varied our positions many times, changing sides, &c., no rest could we obtain. We were both "six-footers," and quite unable to sit cross-legged like tailors—which is the position affected by the wily natives, for whom these instruments of torture were constructed. I could not help wondering how their bones and muscles stood the rude shocks, but supposed they had not the same feelings as ourselves. When we reached the rest-house where we were to put up, we found we were in a very out-of-the-way spot, only visited at long intervals by officials in civil employ; everything was dirty and out of

place, and, to crown all, there was but one bedstead, which fell to my lot, so my chum had to sleep on the hard floor. We pulled some of the matting over and made a rough and hard foundation for his bedding. Next morning we sent for the Thanadar of the village, and ordered a bullock-cart and shikarie, but none arrived till neare vening; we sallied out, but saw nothing, and returned in the dark to supper and bed.

The following day we arose very early, and started off in a bullock-ecka for a drive of thirteen miles further, to reach some of the real haunts of the buck. Our drinking water was bad, the sun hot, and the air dusty, so we had a rough time of it till "tiffin," when we were at last rewarded by the sight of a couple of buck and a few does. After them we went, keeping to the left, to try for a gradual approach to shooting distance. Some thin bushes were growing about 120 yards from where they were lying, behind which my chum dropped for a stalk, he having won the toss for first shot. He could not manage to get into a decent position, for the does kept moving around the bucks, covering them just as his aim was perfect. I had walked on with the ecka, but seeing the game was very uneasy, I asked him if I should fire, at last. He said yes; but they had begun to gallop before I could draw a bead, and then I found the difficulty of judging the distance ahead at which to aim. However, the hammer fell and ditto the buck; up he got immediately and bolted at a tremendous pace, with both hind legs trailing behind him. I followed; but so many natives gave chase that I tried to finish him at once with a second bullet. I missed and then kept up the chase on foot, missing four more shots. At last the natives were all left in the ruck, so I was able to slow down a bit, and the poor brute turned into a small patch of bushes. My chum came up, the natives following, but we made them keep back a long way, and gave the buck half an hour's time; it was probable he would be unable to bolt again. I was truly sorry at having shot him so badly, and wished to put him out of pain; the pleasure of shooting had vanished when we saw his sad plight. We then walked round the patch on either side, and he actually moved out again—but slowly—to be finished by a bullet from my chum's rifle. We held a court of inquiry on him, and found my bullet had broken *both* hind legs just above the hocks; his horns were a little under 22in.

From the above it will be easily learnt how unlikely one is to recover a buck with one leg broken; for this poor brute travelled between two and three miles with two in that condition.

We reached the rest-house at midnight, slept sound, and travelled back next day, looking up some nilghai *en route*, too tame to shoot; we reached our camp at four a.m., and marched with the regiment at six.

There cannot be a doubt that the accuracy of the rifle was the cause of my hitting the buck; if it had been a bad one, the trajectory would have been high, and the chance of a miss much greater; my own error was as to the animal's speed, and probable check while pressing the trigger.

Further on down country we reached a district teeming with buck, vast herds roaming along both sides of the road. Our commandant borrowed a rifle from me one morning at our halt at "coffee-shop" (as Chotahazree on the march is called), and shot two before we resumed our march, without leaving the road. Another morning we saw a curious specimen, with his horns and the imaginary line from tip to tip forming a perfect equilateral triangle. He was a chocolate colour; but, for the sake of his horns, I determined to have him. I was on rear guard, and, as the march was resumed, he bolted away, and was lost to sight in the hazy distance, leaving me to abuse my luck. I was about to move off when my syce drew my attention to a buck coming back from the direction the other had gone in; he said it was the same, and so it was, or his twin brother; he joined his does about 300 yards from the road, and I at once went after him, with my syce leading my pony There was a big canal running across the road nearly at right angles, so I made a detour, and advanced on him with the canal in his rear. This was sure to give me a cross shot, and he bolted away to the right at a gallop. The ·450 rang out with its sharp report, and the buck rolled dead. His horns were about 18in., and a perfect equilateral triangle taken in the way I mentioned. A handy native slung him on his shoulders, and for a modest four annas (barely sixpence) trotted off six miles to camp.

I had often heard of this district, but had never seen heads over 18in. out of it in years agone; so one day I determined I would make a regular effort, and shoot only really good heads. I started off alone on my pony, with rifle slung on the right shoulder, butt downwards (in the manner recommended on page 18), and soon came to a wide and rapid-flowing canal. No bridge was to be seen; so I turned down stream, and moved into the country about a quarter of a mile from the bank. Presently I saw a large herd of bucks and does—perhaps three or four hundred—but my binoculars could show no horns over 18in., as well as I could judge, so I rode on. I saw another large herd a mile further on, and found one buck with a decidedly good head. I rode as near as I dare and, having dismounted, passed the bridle over my arm and circled round. The buck had a great bee in him somewhere, and kept running about after the smaller fry, so that sometimes I saw him, but more often he was hidden by the herd. I got within about 150 yards, knelt down under the pony's nose, and next time he came round managed to plant a bullet from the ·450 just behind his right shoulder. He dropped, and the herd bolted, unmolested, as the next heads were not good enough. He was dead when I reached him, but being alone I hallaled him (cut his throat), removed his interior (gralloched him, in Scotch), and then rode about until I found a willing native, who started off to camp with him. I suppose camp was six miles away, and the presence of troops unknown to the native, yet he hurried off most cheerfully at once, on the chance of backsheesh. These horns were a little over 20in.

After such success, I rode on for some time without seeing anything

good, but presently descried a very black fellow lying down out on the plain away from the crops, with two or three smaller bucks near him. His horns looked good, so I went for him in the same way as for the first. He was more wary, and bolted when I was still at long range, and I had to snap a standing shot. The little rifle was true again, and he tumbled over and over, with the bullet a little too far forward in the shoulder. The others were too small for my attention, and I walked up to my prize. A better pair of horns than the first, just 21in., and a rare black skin. Another friendly native was quickly found and despatched to camp after the usual ceremonies. I began to think my luck was too good to last, and that some error must have been made by my former acquaintances, who usually sent in 18in. as the best they had seen.

The sun was now getting high, and, looking at my watch, I found it about eleven o'clock. Great Scott! perhaps I may get another before noon! When a "griff," three bucks of sorts in a whole day had been the best performance of my seniors, and had won my admiration. Well, I saw more, and at last found a herd coming towards me, with a good head near the tail (of the herd!). They were mighty shy, and the pony and I could not get nearer than 300 yards. Every side we tried, but it was evident they had been molested, and would not stand fire again in a hurry. The best buck looked as good as either I had shot, so I could not give him up, but I was quite unable to get the shot; at last a boy came along with a herd of cattle, and I explained to him I would give him the all-powerful "backsheesh" if he would drive them alongside the game and let me keep under their cover. He acquiesced, with joy depicted on his black phiz, and we were soon within 100 yards. I dropped behind and just followed the tail, in a rather hazardous position owing to some of the "bheils" wishing to rush at me. The boy drove them on, and at last the buck dropped behind his herd, and I was able to fire. He was walking pretty quartly, but the rifle was true and planted the bullet where I wished—behind the shoulder. The herd galloped off with their usual leaps, always taken at the spot where the foremost commenced, and the cattle rushed about in great confusion. A small boy was left in charge of them, and the other started for camp with buck No. 3, whose horns were a bare 19in. I cantered away for camp myself, and was in it by twelve noon. All three buck arrived safely, and the men of my company had great feeding on two of them, while the third gave our mess meat enough and to spare. It was certainly great luck to get three buck averaging 20in. before noon on a day in December in the North-West Provinces.

The first time I tried this rifle at black-buck, I rather expected to find the game smashed up too much, although I had seen plenty shot with rifles of the same bore, but not of quite such a flat trajectory or high initial velocity. However, subsequent experience proved that it

was not too large, provided the bullet was well placed; if in the shoulders or haunch there was much destruction and waste, but I am thankful to say that seldom occurred.

I mentioned previously that one morning our commandant bagged two without leaving the road, with a rifle I lent him; that was the double ·500, and I often bagged two in the day with it, but never three; of course, any number may be shot, but only really good heads or remarkable horns should tempt one to fire. If numbers were the object, I see no reason why a good shot should not shoot a dozen any day in quite an ordinary buck country, but I cannot condemn too strongly such waste and wanton destruction.

There is a most reprehensible practice followed by some would-be sportsmen (*sic*); they take out a Government Martini and ammunition, judge distance on bucks in large herds, at any distance up to five or six hundred yards, and blaze away; the result is heartrending, females with young and fawns more often falling than the game aimed at, in addition to which some unfortunate native receives a rude reminder of the Feringhee's presence by the whistle of a heavy bullet, even if he does not actually provide the billet for the unwelcome messenger. Nothing can excuse the dangerous practice, it is no use saying the Boers do it in South Africa, for the simple reason that the country they shoot over is uncultivated and hardly inhabited, with no cover to conceal a human being from view except such as grass affords; in India the buck is found in the midst of fields and villages, and it takes a man all his time to get a line free from natives, standing crops, and villages even with the light-bulleted, and therefore comparative short-ranged, Express. Even the shot-gun is dangerous in crops, for the native habit of squatting while hoeing or working ground causes his entire concealment, even in a comparatively low one.

To return to the sport, however. I turned out from one of our camps near a large military cantonment, in a bullock-ecka, and drove straight away from the Trunk-road for about a mile, until I found antelope in some open scrub-jungle, with ruins interspersed. I dropped behind the ecka, and examined a good many heads that were scattered about before I found one that was good enough to justify my trying a shot. It was a very black buck, lying down under a small tree, and I had to content myself with a shot at 180 yards, as the others were moving about uneasily. As a rule the best buck keeps quiet, lying down to the last, and after a shot at a good one standing in a crop, a better has often appeared bounding away, having been aroused by the report.

I lay down with both elbows easily placed and had a fair shot behind the shoulder, the ground being quite free of grass, and curving downwards slightly between us. On firing he never moved, then dropped his head and rolled over; on proceeding to have the "hallal" performed, I found the bullet had hit just the edge of the shoulder, about 2 inches to the left of where I had wished to place it. His horns were over eighteen

inches, and he was in splendid condition. I could see nothing more that day, so drove back to camp, late for dinner owing to the distance I had wandered during the afternoon while searching for good buck. It was by no means pleasant, jolting over the open country in the dark!

Another day I mounted my favourite mare, to whom the sight of game was quite delightful. Nothing she enjoyed more than a gallop after a buck, and it needed neither whip nor spur to urge her best speed on such an occasion. I used to hobble her when making a stalk, and sometimes had a weary task recovering her, as she was very nimble, and, even hobbled, could get a mile away, and keep ahead, until the humour to evade me had worked itself out. Well, I rode off into the country to the east of the road, with the ·500 slung from the right shoulder, muzzle up; it was quite comfortable, and I could spare a hand to steady the butt. I followed a country track for some three or four miles, turned off to the right, and looked out for buck. Presently I spotted one lying down in a bare tract that had been ploughed and let lie fallow. With the bridle on my arm, I made a circle round, but before I had reduced the distance to 300 yards, he was up and away; he was a very good one, so I mounted and followed, hoping he might get into some country where a stalk would be possible. He was much too wary, and I had to relinquish the chase. Wandering on, I came to a slight rise, and found some six or seven buck, with a few females, feeding not far from a crop that would give me cover for a stalk. I dismounted, hobbled the mare, and left her there to attract their attention, while I retired behind the rise and circled round for my stalk through the cover. To my horror, as I crouched along, the mare stumbled away and left me. Luckily, the antelope were so much interested in her movements, that I was able to continue my stalk, and got a fair shot at the best buck off the knee; he was about 150 yards away, but received the bullet a little behind the shoulder and dropped, kicking for a moment only. I did the hallaling myself, repeating the usual blessing as taught me in a district many miles away, and then turned to look for my mare. She was in a nice green crop over a mile away, so I had to trudge along, leaving the buck on the ground, but she moved on again when she saw me coming, and defied me for nearly an hour. A solitary villager then turned up and helped me to catch her. To my disgust, one stirrup —leather and iron—were gone, and I had to follow her tracks for a long way back before I recovered them: it was great luck doing so. The native took the buck on his shoulders and started for camp; I made a long detour, seeing a few heads, but none worthy of a sportsman's attention.

Many another pleasant afternoon I had, and sometimes a whole day, but I never excelled my morning's work when I got the three, averaging 20in., before noon. Once in a way I got a right and left at good heads, but it is seldom that two worth having are found together, except in the Punjab, where they are few but good.

Once I found a good buck lying down on a rise, about 100 yards from a green crop that was not very high. I made the stalk between, as I

could not have seen the buck from the crop, and succeeded in approaching to within 150 yards; I was unseen, as the ground quite concealed me. Having removed my helmet, I gently raised my head and peered over the rise, to see my buck scratching the side of his face with his hind toe, quite oblivious of my approach. I wriggled up a bit with the ·500 rifle, got both elbows on the ground, and aimed at the point of his shoulder quickly. It was very hot on my bare head, and that alone hastened my movements. I fired, and the buck gave one bound into the air, falling dead. Amongst the green crop, in the hollow to my right, sprang up some bucks and does, one of the former being fairly black. I quickly decided he was worth the shot, and slewed round sufficiently to cover him; they were trotting off, and I had to rise and fire from the knee. He received the contents of the left barrel, but, instead of dropping, galloped round in a wide circle for nearly 200 yards, and then dropped dead. On examination I found number one had received the bullet at the spot I intended; his horns were just 18in. Number two was hit about 6in. too far back, but must have died from the suffocation caused by internal hæmorrhage, the lungs being quite stuffed with blood; his horns were a little over 17in.

CHAPTER II.

OORIAL.

FROM the yarns given in the previous article it will be seen that the ·450 rifle was eminently suited for black-buck at any rate; so we will change the venue to the hot, arid hills of the Punjab, where the oorial roams many miles from water, apparently never suffering from thirst, and you shall judge whether it is the weapon you would like when in his vicinity.

At the end of one hot weather I was very low in spirits through having no shots at four-legged game for over twelve months, so determined to try a range I had seen during my wanderings on duty some time before. I sent for my syce and arranged how the relays of ponies were to be laid on my route, and having obtained three days' leave, drove off in the well-known bamboo-cart, two days later. It was a hot evening in September, and much more likely to drive fellows to the high hills of the Himalayas than to the low red ranges running out into the bare, burnt-up Punjab. Company I could have none; but when one is accustomed to wild shooting, there can be no feeling of *ennui* because one is alone; it is the total absence of the game one is in search of that produces that most distressing complaint.

As the air of the evening met my face, I felt decidedly cooler and more comfortable; but when I reached the solitary rest-house where I had to await the morning light to start with the shikarie of the place in search of a suitable site for the tent, the air was hot as from a furnace and my throat dry and rough. At dawn there was a much colder feeling about, and we soon started off with a large mussuck (leather bag) full of water, borne by one of the shikarie's proverbial "bhais" (brothers). A bottle of cold tea, made in the only good way for assuaging a hot hunter's thirst, was slung from the shikari's shoulder in a long woollen stocking, well wetted. We had a hot march to the range, about three miles, and then, having sent the tent, &c., to the very top of a saddle between two points, where any chance breeze could be felt, we clambered up a spur, in the shade of the rocks above until near the summit. We turned west along the range, and studied many a corrie and ravine, seeing nothing but females and puny males. By eleven o'clock the cold tea was exhausted, and the sun so powerful that I was glad indeed to reach the tent and throw myself on a bare bedstead with the wind blowing over and deceiving me as to its temperature There was little appetite during those hot hours, and much water was drunk, and more soaked up by a towel tied

around my head. It was an awful day; and the evening crawl further along the ridge produced nothing worth shooting.

The next day was as bad, and the water supply running short. One man was set off to a distant village to replenish the mussick as soon as the sun got low, and there was a decided feeling of conviction that the oorial had been shot down in the years gone by. The third and last morning was much the same as the others, and after breakfast we started to work back along the range, sending the tent, &c., down by another route. How hard and uncomfortable those rocks were! Some miserable wild olive bushes, dried-up tussocks of coarse grass, and bare oleander wands, did not lend much of variety or beauty to the scene, which the awful sun and shimmering haze were trying to change into a furnace.

At last we came to a regular chasm some hundred and odd feet deep, which ran into the range at right angles to its length, and commenced at a considerable elevation from the plains below. We could not get down it, and had to turn to the left along its brink. The shikarie suddenly grasped my arm, and pointed to my feet apparently; he drew me back, and explained there were some oorial down below in the rift, and he would see what was amongst them. There I crouched while he reconnoitred, feeling baked and nigh sunstroke, although I had an excellent double helmet on and much flannel padding down my spine. When he returned he could only announce one male, which of course he declared was a monster. Creeping to the edge, I looked down, but could detect nothing for some time; the cleanings and grasses were not so burnt up as on the exposed ridges and rather concealed the ground. At last I saw some movements, and with the binoculars could identify a male and some six or seven females. His horns were good enough for me, never having shot one; and, finding there was no apprehension of danger amongst the herd, I was able to make myself comfortable on the edge of the chasm, with the shikarie holding on to my ankles, the old 450 was then pushed forward, and aim taken short along the back of my prey. The glare and dancing haze, together with the perspiration pouring down my forehead and into my eyes, made my aim uncommonly faulty. I pressed the trigger, and the shikarie announced the game was hit. As the smoke cleared I saw him moving away slowly up the hill, but he fell over and lay still, just as I fired another shot. The females ran about scared, but quite unable to discern the point of danger. My ambition was satisfied, so I stood up, and then they soon deserted their late lord and master, and galloped out of the gorge, and away over the breakneck hillside. We had to make a long detour to reach the head of the chasm, and work round and down to the ram; he was a nice fellow, with horns of just 25in., but my first bullet had hit some 6in. too far back, and on the left of the backbone. On opening him we found his paunch full of grass, very wet, and looking even green; while we well knew he had gathered it amongst the corries, and had drunk no water for some days perhaps. I must add that the bullet had split up inside him, and made a regular mess of lungs,

heart, and general interior economy, yet he moved some twelve or fifteen yards before he fell. This is worth remarking, and I shall allude to it again further on in my yarns.

Well, we had no choice; I must carry the rifle, and the shikarie the ram, and we struck down the hills and away to the rest-house. It was almost at the end of the range and close to the road, perhaps a mile and a half away, that we had found the only decent ram. It was a weary and exhausting tramp back, and even four bottles of cold soda-water did not assuage my thirst at the bungalow.

In the afternoon I started to drive back, with the oorial in the net of the trap, and reached the mess in time for dinner. I had no more of this killing sport for a year, the cold weather being fully occupied with work and the hot weather spent after ibex, &c., in the glorious Himalayas; but I returned early in October and visited another range, not from choice, but because other "sahib log" (white folk) had gone to the range I had been on before and particularly wished to try again. (They got some good heads—one, the best I have seen or heard of, 36in.; I measured it subsequently with my tape, and can vouch for the length.) I fired with a ·500 rifle that trip, and must include the results (*nil*) in my remarks on that bore when considering its points later on.

About a fortnight later we reached this range while marching down country, and I tried the ·450 then. A chum and I got a day's leave and started for a tent we had sent out to pass the night in, but saw no game *en route*. Next morning [illegible] choice of sides of range to shoot on, and I won the southern; crossing over to it, a small herd of six or seven came bolting down about 150 yards from me and about 400 from my chum, for we had only just separated. I fired a snap shot at the ram, but he was amongst the bushes and I could not swear to him, so missed. Away they went into a nullah that crossed the plateau, and I ran quickly forward on to the edge, loading as I ran. They came out the other side, and I spotted the ram end on, bolting away as hard as he could, nearly 120 yards off. I had a nice shot at the back of his head, but, as I was jumpy, could not press the trigger at once. However, at last the hammer fell, and ditto the ram, dead as a door nail, for the bullet hit fair at the back of the skull where the joint of the neck fits in, and made a regular hash of his brains, &c. He was about 150 yards off when he fell. His horns were 25in. and 24in. respectively, being much broken at the tips, and might have measured from one to three inches more if perfect.

Having gralloched him, I went on, and later came on a solitary ram in a ravine. He clambered up on the opposite side, disturbed by my follower, and would not stop to look at me even, so I made a guess at the distance, put up the 200 yards sight, and let drive. I had misjudged, for the bullet hit the rocks just over his shoulder. Bad luck, I thought; but I hoped for another chance, and at last, while sitting resting about half a mile ahead, back came the ram or one very much like him. I remained

where I was, hoping he would come within range, for I have often found game not observe my presence (owing to my clothing being of a colour suitable to the locality), until a movement has caught their eye. He halted about 200 yards away, but behind a bush, so that his outline and position were both concealed. Suddenly he advanced a little, and then hurried down a ridge; I tried to snap at him, misjudged, and hit just behind him. I need not say he hooked it very smartly then. I turned back for the road running through a piece of the range, met my chum, and we galloped fourteen miles on into camp, where our kit and game subsequently arrived safely.

The ground patronised by oorial is certainly most exacting as to endurance, health, and shoe-leather. The stones and pebbles are loose and sharp, rendering walking dangerous, and removing the sole off an ammunition-boot in an incredibly short time. Water is scarce and bad, shade there is none, while the game is wary and able to travel at a great pace over the most dangerous places. On one occasion I tried some hill shoes, "chuppalies," made from tree bark twisted up into thin rope. They held well and made no noise, but I wore out two pairs a day and could not replace them; for it was some 100 miles to the valley I got them in! Still, the game was worth getting, not existing out of the Punjab save in distant Ladak, where it is called sharpoo, and generally classed as a distinct species. After a very careful comparison and examination of many heads, I am of opinion they are identical; for it must be remembered that in different ranges of hills different patterns of horns will be found, each peculiar to its own locality. In the two I have visited I observed the horns were generally lighter in colour, more polished, and perfect at the tips in one, while they were heavier, rougher, and much broken in the other. The latter were identical with sharpoo horns, while the former were like neither, yet they were a little nearer sharpoo country, if one were to consider the possible routes down the rivers along which the progenitors may have travelled from Ladak.

On returning to the plains from a long trip in the hills, I made my way to the range where I shot the oorial through the back of the head with the single ·450, but tried the ·500 this time. I sent out a tent, &c., which I reached after a very hot march, for it was early in October. Next morning I soon found some, but amongst the herd of three males and a dozen females there was nothing I thought good enough, so I went on. After real hot and tiring climbing and scrambling, we came across a similar herd, and then saw nothing till the afternoon, when an old man we met volunteered to show me a big one that always lay down in a certain spot he knew of. I explained to him that he was to look for the game and point it out, so that I might make the stalk, for neither he nor my gun-carrier knew anything of the art. He took me in hand at

once, turned back and led me along a villainously steep hill-side with more than the usual amount of grass on it. Turning up into a ravine he signed to me to be ready, so I loaded the ·500 and carried it at half-cock, but could not quite determine from his signs whether I was to expect a herd or solitary ram. Suddenly a very fine ram jumped up out of the tussock-grass about 40 yards ahead, and went away rather slowly along the side of the ravine. I pushed past the old man, cocking the rifle as I moved, and had just raised it for a good shot at the brute's head, when the old man seized my arm and shook me as a terrier does a rat, shouting, "Sahib, Sahib." He must have clean lost his head, and by the time I had shaken myself free, the ram was bolting and my snap went over his head, and ditto the second barrel; he was out of sight before I could reload, and I abused that venerable old rogue with all the choice epithets in my vocabulary, sending him away disgraced at the end! I felt ready for any violence towards him, nearly. The remainder of the day I tramped about without a shot, and then descended a deep ravine, where the terraces reminded me of the steps of the Great Pyramid, and were equally as tiring. My tent was two miles away under a solitary tree, and I never slept sounder than I did that night.

I was off at dawn next morning, and followed up the ravine running from near camp, which enabled me to reach the higher ground without much steep climbing; the stones and rocks are so hard and sharp in these hills that boots have little hold, and "chupplies" (sandals) last but little time.

Soon we found a large herd, which I stalked three times; there was not a good male to be found amongst them, although I hoped that one would have joined them as they moved about. No, luck was against me, and I scanned the herd again and again from within two hundred yards, only to decide I could fire at nothing! It was fagging work, but, after a rest, I clambered about with the local man all day, and returned to camp weary and footsore, without having fired a shot.

We tried up a small ravine next day, and soon came on tracks quite fresh; I took the double, loaded and put it on my shoulder, expecting to see game soon. We examined each ravine we entered or passed, and very bare and uninviting they looked, being composed of a rough conglomerate of stones and gravel, with no herbage save along the bottoms. The configuration was due to the action of water, I believe, similar to many other parts of the Punjab.

As we were crossing the end of one, my man shouted, "Sahib, Sahib, Sahib!" and on looking round I could just distinguish some oorial at the top of the ravine, with the sun shining straight behind and above them! One male had a fine head, and I hastily fired when they halted for a moment; the bullet went just over him into the ground, as I judged the distance to be about a hundred and twenty yards. The bright sun deceived me truly, for I subsequently found it was barely sixty! I was very much disgusted, but could only lament the misfortune

of the position I was in when firing, for they had vanished over the crest. By the time we scrambled up to the spot they had been on, they had travelled a long way and were hidden by the broken ground.

Later on that day I stalked a herd most successfully, but could see no male worth shooting, in my opinion, although I was within *twenty yards* and undiscovered! I then had to discharge my willing, but quite inefficient gun-carrier, and trudge away back to where my camp had been moved on the road to the railway. I secured another man belonging to this locality, and left at dawn with him. About 8 a.m. we came on a herd of six good oorial, the best I ever saw, and tried a stalk by working down a neighbouring gorge and turning up to the left, so as to take them in rear. I always tried to keep high up on the hills looking for game, and then descend for a shot, as it is generally downwards all game look for danger. Bad luck attended me, for they were very restless and had moved off when I reached my point, chiefly owing to the shouting of a cowherd to his charges in the ravines of the foot-hills. We made a detour, hoping to meet them as they turned up again, but they went down, and I found them three hundred yards below me, gazing up hill! I left my men and tried a single stalk, but failed, nearly falling every step, and missing the largest male, with the 200 yards leaf up and a very full sight. He was nearly three hundred yards away, but, seeing he was so restless and unapproachable, I chanced a shot for the sake of the splendid head. During the afternoon I came on some more, but could not get a shot. My notes end up that trip with the summary that the ground was generally very wild on that range, but that I would probably have bagged a couple of good heads, had my local men any idea of sport and the science of stalking.

My readers will quite understand from the above that game is plentiful enough, but that good heads are both scarce and exceedingly wary, while at the same time little assistance can be expected from local men, whose chief ideas are cattle, crops, and snuff!

CHAPTER III.

CHINKARAH, BUSTARD, AND COOLUN.

THE beautiful chinkarah or ravine-deer is not a very difficult game to find and stalk, but, owing to its diminutive size, offers a decidedly small mark; it is plentiful in some parts, unknown in others, and may be shot with smaller bores than ·450. However, it was with the latter I tackled it, and never found too much damage done, provided I hit fair behind the shoulder.

One cold weather I determined to look for them, so sent out the syce with a rifle about fifteen miles to await my arrival next morning. I rode out, and, having secured a native to carry some lunch, cold tea, and the rifle, started off along some low sand-dhunes to a patch of thin jungle that spread over a good deal of that country. After about an hour's walk I found some of the game feeding in an open glade, with no cover near them save some tussocks of short dry grass. The binoculars showed one fair head, so, having taken the rifle and enjoined perfect concealment on my followers, I prepared to stalk. They were [illegible] feeding about the grass, and when I saw all heads down, I crawled forward on my hands and knees, carrying the rifle in my right hand and laying it down each pace most carefully, with my eyes strained up to watch for a head showing; their bodies were visible about as far as the medial line, and whenever a head rose, I was motionless until it dropped again. My clothes were identical in colour with the sandy soil and rough grass, and, if motionless, I could not have attracted the eye of any game. As I got nearer, it became a matter of screwing myself along on my elbows and the toes of my boots; it was not easy work nor pleasant, for the Punjab sun was beating down on my back out of a beautiful blue sky. At last I arrived within 150 yards, after many anxious moments while being scrutinised by the does. The buck I at last spotted for certain, and tried to aim off my stomach, but I was too low, and the grass hid him completely; it is wonderful what short grass will conceal a man lying on his face, and interfere with his aim at an animal some 2ft. high at the shoulder. There was no help for it but to try and get on the knee. I succeeded in doing this unobserved, but as I fixed my aim the buck looked up as if by instinct; it was too late, for the bullet reached him before he had decided as to the identity of the queer lump so near. The others scampered off, unmolested for two reasons: there is much danger in snapping off in a thin jungle, as natives and cattle may be anywhere about, and unless the next best pair of horns are good, it is unnecessary

destruction. The native ran up and "hallaled" him (cut his throat) in the orthodox Mussulman fashion; the horns were fair, about 13in., and the skin a nice one. We had to work out to the edge of the jungle and secure another native to carry the game back to where the syce was halted for the day. I wandered about all day but fired at nothing, and reached cantonments in time for mess.

Another day I was more successful, bagging two, but I missed a snap shot at a hyena at close quarters, the only one I have ever seen. As we were walking to the jungle from the road, I noticed the tracks of a very large-footed dog in the sand, damp with the morning dew, and questioned my follower, who at once declared it was a "lacker bagher" or hyena. The same word is used in some places for the leopard, but I need hardly point out that the tracks of the latter show no marks of claws, while the former show them just as they appear in those of a dog. Leopards do not frequent open dak jungle either. He had evidently been visiting the village hard by, looking for some carrion probably, and as the tracks were fresh, I decided to follow him up. After many times being thrown out on hard dry ground, we at last tracked him into a very thick patch of grass and bushes, perhaps 20ft. across. I stood close to the edge, looking down and into it, for it was only some 3ft. high in parts, while my man beldoured the bushes on my right. Suddenly there was a rush, and an indistinct form passed out and away on the far side. I made a hurried snap, but certainly missed, and when the smoke cleared the brute had [illegible] I never saw him again.

Great luck sometimes happens to one, and I can well recall one of the last days I had in this same little jungle. I started at early dawn as usual, and on reaching my point for halting, turned into the country with my native, who had become quite trained to my requirements and ways; he always brought a youngster with him (the proverbial "dhai" to carry the game, for it is truth that I never visited the spot without bagging at least one buck. Luck was with me still, and I had a stalk behind a thin bush, mostly on my stomach over hard dry ground, after a solitary buck; he was nibbling the shoots of the bushes, but very fidgety, rushing about at times most erratically. At last I got well up to the bush and knelt down on the right side, from which position I got a fair shot at about 150 yards, and killed him. I found his horns a pretty pair, much about 13in., but his coat all rough and staring on the back. On investigation I found the skin punctured with many small holes, with lumps under each. These proved to be "bots" or maggots, some three-quarters of an inch long, with their heads buried in the flesh and tails protruding into the small hole in the skin. On removing the skin they remained fast in the flesh, making it look most loathsome; the natives in my compound did not object in the least. The irritation of these pests caused all the uneasiness I had noticed while stalking. I had heard of the mad bolts and rushes of bucks and does at certain seasons, but saw the cause and effect at last.

Having despatched the carcase to my halting place, I had much

wandering about for an hour or two, but seeing nothing worth having, and believing all were infested with the maggot plague, I gave the man my rifle and we turned towards our starting point. As we came out of the jungle I was some way ahead, and just cast my eye over the young green corn that grew close up to its edge. Right out in it, some 300 yards away, were three small ostriches stalking about. "By Jove, bustard! that's what those are!" flashed through my mind. I had never seen one before, nor heard of their being within forty miles of the station. "I wish I could get a shot" followed the first thought, and then I disappeared behind one of the last bushes, and warned my man to make a detour and bring me the rifle. When he reached me he was not aware of what they were hardly, so it was evident they were not regular visitants. They were slowly stalking away from me, quite out of shot, but, as my eye roamed around for any cover to make a stalk behind, two separate little bushes caught my eye on an old boundary-line between the patch of corn the birds were on and the one next it. They were small but thick, and the sandy soil had drifted up to the boundary-line, raising it some 2ft. above the level of the plain. The corn itself was too short to give any cover for a stalk, and a stern chase is always a long one, but it looked possible I might reach the bushes for a shot at a new kind of target.

To deceive the birds, we moved away from our bush straight for home, if I may apply that term to syce and pony on the side of a villainous unmade road, under a solitary tree. I left my man behind the last bush, and then held on until those I had spotted on the boundary came between me and the game. Down I dropped on the knee, and did not take very long to cross the corn to the bigger bush, but I could not fire through it, owing to its thickness. There were three big things slowly striding ahead, so there was no time to lose; they were over 100 yards away. I worked round to the left of the bush, trying to fire off my stomach; it was useless; the corn quite hid them when my chin was on mother earth. I then worked back to the right of my cover, and got slowly on the knee; they were then some distance further on, but I chose the biggest, and drew the bead at where the points of his wings or shoulders would be. The usual smart crack of 4½ drs. of powder, and *two* huge birds rose from the plain; away they went, but number three I could not see. I was rather startled, as I thought he was so large that, lying dead, he would show plainly on the corn; I went forward to investigate, and found him, the corn being just above his carcase; the bullet had gone through the points of both wings, smashing them, but only leaving a round hole through them, and his chest; he was stone dead, and I was truly delighted. I paced the distance, and found it 147 yards. We soon reached the road, and next morning I had a deputation wait on me to inspect this *rara avis*; few of them had ever seen the great bustard, and none had shot him. We dined off him subsequently at mess, and voted him excellent eating, while his feathers still supply me materials for a particular trout fly I am very

partial to. I gave away many of the feathers, and should not be surprised to hear they have helped to kill the wily salmon also; my fishing has been after the smaller fry, so I never tried the larger sizes, and, alas, I fear not one remains now.

Altogether, I shot some fifteen chinkarah there, the smallest about 10in., the best about 13in. I saw nothing better than I shot, but was once sold, and bagged a female with a pair of horns quite abnormally long, though thin; they quite deceived me when examining a small herd with the binoculars. I think they measured nearly 9in., but they were so thin that they looked a good 12in.

A year later I had been moved to a bad shooting district, the oorial I have told of being the only game near, with an odd chinkarah at the foot of the same hills. I left the latter alone. On one occasion I was out in the district on duty, shot plenty of very fishy ducks (some eleven varieties) with the gun, but only saw one wary chinkarah, who quite declined to let me get nearer than 400 yards. One day, coming back to camp from work, I spotted a large flock of coolun (cranes), amongst some thin young corn, so changed ponies and rode back with the well-beloved ·450 to look for them. It was getting dusk when I found them, looking like grey ghosts stalking about the wheat. I dismounted and circled round till they began to get nervous, when I dropped on the knee, put up the sight for 200 yards, and covered one; another was stalking across a little way behind him, so I waited until they were in line, and pressed the trigger. At the flash and report the pony gave such a jump I was nearly capsized, for I had never fired in such close proximity before. Having quieted down, I was allowed to advance; one coolun was dead, the other flopping along some twenty yards behind, but he dropped and lay motionless before I got up. Yes, the two dropped to the one bullet, and neither was damaged in the least, shot through the points of the wings the first, and a little further back the second. The next thing was how to get them to camp; the pony would not allow them near, but a bandage over the eyes, a strap round the four legs of the birds, and they were soon over the saddle-bow, their heads hanging down nigh the pony's fore-feet. When I removed the bandage there was much nervousness, and I was denied a mount. I did not hurry the matter, but led on towards camp, and presently was allowed to mount, eventually riding in triumphant with rifle and game. Having removed the tail-covert feathers, so ornamental for some fair one's hat, the birds were cooked and eaten before many days had elapsed. I wonder where the other members of that merry party now are; one I have in my mind's eye, for I saw his name in print lately, the others are gone but not forgotten.

CHAPTER IV.

MARKHOR.

So far I have confined myself to some of the sport within reach of those whose duties lead them to out-of-the-way places in the plains, or who may be stationed in some of our most thronged cantonments. The Himalayas, ever glorious and invigorating, are getting more opened up every year, facilities for travelling to their base being nearly perfect; so I purpose just telling of some of the sport enjoyed with the dear old ·450 in wandering through them. I never penetrated into Ladak or Thibet, owing to various changes in plans, and difficulties in getting enough leave. Only once had I the latter quality, and then unexpected obstacles occurred; but I have visited the range from the Indus (west of Murree) to Darjeeling, and seen the haunts of much game, although I cannot in any way claim to have made such things as "large bags."

Perhaps the markhor deserves first place in the list of game. To my mind he is the monarch of the Himalayas. The Ovis polii has a heavier, and the maral a more beautiful head; but the former is found on tolerably level, open ground, we may surmise, as the length of horn would much incommode him on precipices or in woods. The latter inhabits much the same style of ground as the markhor, judging by the beautiful pictures in Atkinson's books, "The Altai Range" and "Upper and Lower Amoor;" but both are in ranges so distant, that they have no claim to be compared with him in these remarks, and few Englishmen can say at the end of the nineteenth century that they have shot either.

Anyone who has seen the markhor of Kashmir in his wild state (amongst precipices, running close together, deep into high ranges crowned with the fine silver birch and junipers, as high as shrubs can find a soil and climate suitable to their existence) must allow that there is no game more hoary and noble looking. Can you not picture to yourself an animal about as big as a fallow deer, weighing perhaps as much as 250lb., with a rough, shaggy coat, horns that reach over his stern when the head is thrown back, and a massive beard, hanging down a foot at least, which would fill your two hands? There is a gradual twist in those horns, varying in the number of turns according to the locality in which bred, and a curve more graceful than pen can describe; while the eye is large and fearless, although its owner acknowledges man to be an opponent he dare not face. If you study him on his native precipice, surveying the neighbourhood and listening attentively for anything he cannot comprehend and so marks "dangerous," there will be something

to repay you for the long and toilsome marches, the inferior, ill-cooked food, and the general hardships you have undergone in order to reach his majesty's dominions. What can compare with the patience with which he will stand motionless for some quarter of an hour, gazing from his narrow ledge directly at you, or into the broad valley down at the gorge's mouth? Must you not allow he looks grand, the "monarch of the glen," and far surpasses anything you had imagined, even when well refreshed with pages from Kinloch and other writers? I think Landseer would have christened a picture of this wild goat with a name more laudatory. I can fix on none, not having a vocabulary comprehensive enough. So let him rest, one of the Creator's most beautiful works, to the eye of a true sportsman.

I was after this splendid game in Kashmir, and had passed many weeks wandering along the ranges with no success, when at last I found a curious nullah with a good many in it. At first I had real hardship, my bedding not turning up, and the cold at night being intense, for it was well on in October. I was nearly starved, too; but when things had come square, I had not much further cause to complain. Our camp was formed amongst some leafless birch trees on the edge of a corrie in a ravine that ran precipitately down into one of the large valleys of the range. As there was no tent, only bedding and cooking utensils, there was nothing to attract the attention of game save the smoke of our fire, which was well concealed in under the rocks. It was precious cold that night, for snow had fallen previously, but on a bed of dried fern I slept well, being awakened once or twice by heavy stones crashing down the other side of the ravine, which had probably been disturbed by game.

At dawn we were up, packed the bedding, &c., and after a hasty breakfast moved up the ravine, no game being visible and the precipices below quite impassable from above. The men with the bedding were directed to follow us up to the saddle of the mountain, and then go down to an overhanging rock in the valley beyond, where I had bivouacked before. As I clambered up I heard some stones falling, and suddenly saw a large markhor coming down the opposite side, far above me, nearly a quarter of a mile away. The goojur (cowherd) and I dropped where we were on the edge of the corrie, and well we passed for stones in our grey clothes. The two coolies behind were beckoned to lie down amongst the rocks, and we turned our attention to the game. Down awful places he clattered, a solitary old male, with a long black beard, white chest, and good horns. In one place he tumbled on the loose *débris* and went sprawling; but he soon recovered his feet, at the same time sending a perfect cartload of stones down the gorge. He then turned to his left along a ledge, under a rock and behind a lonely pine. There he turned to the gorge, halted, and looked away to the valley two miles below, listening to some cowherds who were holloaing in it. They soon stopped, and then he turned his head and looked straight at us. We were so like the stones and so immovable, though tortured with cramp in the legs, that he could

not discover us, and presently turned to look down the valley again. Across the corrie to where he stood was about 350 yards; but the light morning breeze was blowing up into our faces, and carried our scent away over the ridges above, to our left and his rear. It was an awful time while he remained there, scanning us and the valleys alternately, for I was on slippery sloping grass between stones, my left leg doubled under me and asleep, hands bitterly cold, grasping my rifle and trying to remain motionless.

After about half an hour (it may have been more, but certainly not less) he was satisfied there was no one about, and down he went a little further, halting behind another pine, where he remained about a quarter of an hour; luckily the coolies were well hidden and silent, so he heard and saw nothing. Down he dropped again, first both forefeet, then both hind, on what I should call almost a precipice, up which none of us could clamber. As soon as he was out of sight behind a friendly ridge in the gullet of the corrie (which ran from our ridge, and shut out the view into the bottom), away I clambered, trying to warm my poor hands and steady my nerves. His horns were so long and heavy that I began to hope he was a monster, a regular "breaker of the record," and to lament my rifle was only a single ·450. My excitement was intense. Nothing could I see of him, though I heard much crashing through bushes, and stones being sent flying. I subsequently found he had got into a small gorge I could not possibly see down, in order to drink. I beckoned up the goojur and we went down a little, and then along slowly to try to get into the gorge; this, we found, would expose us too much, so we sat down looking through the thin birch trees, and waiting to see the game move up again. At last he quietly clambered up the cliff, but lower down the gorge, and halted on a very narrow ledge to look up towards us; he was barely 200 yards away, but I could not draw a bead on him, as I found the birch twigs came across, and might very easily deflect the bullet in its flight. He did not discover us, turned to the left, and walked very carefully along the ledge, until he reached a small patch of juniper bushes, that found a home on a space about 6ft. square. There he halted, turned broadside on, and gazed across the gorge below. I had a clear view of him then, through an opening in the birch tops; but, as he was over 200 yards away, although below me, I put up the 200 yards leaf, rested my elbows on my knees, took a very full sight at the usual spot behind the shoulder, pulled myself together, and pressed the trigger. Round he flew, and away along the ledge. "Missed, by Jove!" thought I; but the goojur said, "Hit behind the shoulder, fair. I saw the hair wave about." As he spoke, down dropped the noble animal, and rolled until stopped at the edge of the cliff by some most opportune junipers. Away went the goojur, a Mussulman, to hallal him, by cutting his throat before life was extinct, so that all true followers of the Prophet might gorge on the flesh. Life was extinct when he reached him, you bet; but I was supposed to be unable to judge that fact, and the ceremony was duly

performed. He shouted out that he was a "burra wallah" (big fellow), and, with my other native's help, I was soon with him. Just 46in. his horns measured; but, with his grand black beard and massive carcase, they looked much more to my eyes. They were a good pair for that range, but they have been killed there nearly 60in.

It took a long time to skin and cut him up, but I was much interested with the result of the shot. I had hit him fair behind the shoulder; his lungs were cut to ribbons, yet he went some forty yards before he fell. I believe he was 230 yards away when I fired.

Next day we went away north from our camp under a rock, after cautioning my coolies to keep quiet and make no noise. It was just after dawn, and, as soon as light was come into the valley, we saw five markhor—one as good as my trophy of the day before—on the other side of the valley, not half a mile from camp. Our men then commenced jabbering, and the game moved up and into cover, in no hurry apparently. Our hillside was bare, so, when we had given them time to get well amongst the crags, and could see nothing of them after a careful scrutiny with the glasses, round by camp we went, abused the coolies in strong terms but with bated breath, and then followed up.

On arriving where we had last seen the big one and another, we could find nothing, the junipers and small pines forming a very thick jungle; suddenly my man spotted one walking along a ledge about a hundred yards above us. I thought him the good one, but could get no rest, so fired standing, and the bullet hit the rocks just above him. It was a bad place for a shot, at an angle of 50°, with the jungle just keeping its own hold, but I was to have a shot in a worse place later on. My man advised me to follow him up, as we had not been seen, and consequently he would not have gone far.

Up I went again, holding on to the brushwood and slipping every step. After we had clambered perhaps 100ft., my arm was suddenly seized and the rifle thrust into my hand by my man, who pointed out a markhor on the very top of the cliff against the sky-line, looking straight down at us. I could not retain a foothold without a grasp of the bushes, so seized my man and pulled him behind me, making him hold me up almost, while I took aim. It was far over 200 yards, and seemed almost straight up. I never had such a shot except with a gun at rocketers. Just as I was about to fire, the game turned his head to the left, and I could see his right shoulder and forelegs, but his body was end on. I did my best, let drive, and down he came, not striking bush or anything, for some fifty feet; hit he was, but somewhere behind, I feared. Suddenly he emerged on the ridge, and staggered over into another gully, where we found him standing in some birch trees. I fired a shot to finish him, seeing his fore-quarter covered with blood, but missed. I could not make it out, the bullet passing over him, and I had aimed low, as he was only forty yards away; but I looked at the rifle, and found I had neglected to put down the 200 yards leaf after firing the first time; that accounted for my bad

shot, and I soon put matters right. We followed him, the native along his track, while I clambered above, and soon came on him lying down amongst a few birches, breathing heavily. I waited for my man to turn up, beckoned him to me, and finished the game, when he rose to his feet, with a bullet in the neck. This was a young markhor, with small horns, and nothing like so large or heavy as my first.

My man then went off over the cliffs and corries, looking for the others, which he found soon enough; but my heart-breaking coolies came, chattering loudly, along a sheep-path below where I had been shooting; they were seen by the game, which went away for miles, across and down the valley to a distant ridge. I could do no more that morning, and made myself at home by going down to my permanent camp in the valley far below, where skins were pegged out and heads cleaned.

For some days after this I saw nothing but females and small males, amongst some gorges I had not been in before; I fired at nothing, so by this time some of them may be real good ones, I think.

On the next Monday morning I was up with the dawn, and away to the top of the high cliff that overhung our camp; I suppose it was six miles up and around, and we had all our trouble for nothing, for we found plenty of good tracks, but saw only females and small males. We tried back around the crest, until we reached the edge of an awful khud (precipice) above the gorge where I shot my first markhor; stones went rattling down, but we could not see the face of the cliff, and it was perfectly unscalable. A cruel cold wind was driving through us, and I could barely retain my hold of the alpenstock; we scrambled along the crest, seeing females and small males, until at last I was so cold and exhausted that I had to squat down under a rock and try to get shelter while I rubbed my hands and feet, and recovered my wind. At these high altitudes in October, exertion very much sooner exhausts one than earlier in the year, after March. A fine old cock Monaul pheasant suddenly shot out from immediately under my seat, and went floating down into the valley with his usual outcry; he had not noticed my arrival, but while feeding up the rocks had got my wind, and made off, as he had no idea how near I might be.

Snow began to fall, so I was about to move off and clamber down to where I had ordered my camp to be made, but just sent my man up to examine the pass and nullah on the north side of it, to see if any game had come up; it was getting dark, too, and markhor move out to feed before the short twilight is ended. He soon hissed to attract my attention, and, when I had got up, he pointed out a markhor; but I could only see the animal through the glasses, as he was behind some thin birch trees. He was standing with his stern to the snowy blast, looking down toward my camp far below. After some time I could just distinguish him with my naked eye, put up the leaf for 200 yards, and tried to take aim. See him I could not, I was so blinded with the cold, and it was so dark with the snow-clouds overhead; at last I made him out very dimly, and pressed

the trigger, aiming high, as he appeared to be over 200 yards away, across a gully and below me. I missed, and he turned up hill quite leisurely, not being able to discern where the shot was from; I fired two more shots, with no better result, as he clambered up a steep bit of conglomerate. I then asked my man if he had seen where my shots had gone, and he said high over the animal. I tried another, but he did not appear to be hit; then another, and finally my sixth and last, I vowed. Then my man said he was hit, and that I should give him a finisher. I saw he was bagged, tottering on the ledge, over which he fell plump, plump, about 50ft., and then rolled and bumped down into the head of the gorge. I guessed his horns were smashed, and so it soon proved, the right being broken short off about 6in. above his head. I sent the native to "hallal" him, and made my way round and down to camp, whence I sent the other men to bring in the beast. They were not long over it, and I soon was scanning the head; very thick horns, but small, about 32in., with one broken and the piece missing. I then turned to the carcase and found I had hit three times; one (my fourth shot, I believe) in the shoulder, another cut the inside of the hind leg and removed one testicle clean, the third cut the brisket through, just behind the fore legs! Having aimed low, I conclude these latter wounds were my fifth and sixth shots. Next morning I recovered the missing horn amongst some snow and junipers. I was awoke at night by the extreme cold, and finally by a heavy snowstorm coming on, which covered my bedding as I lay under the rock. It came down heavily for a short time, and we were unable to move out in the morning until it had melted somewhat. My goojur was down with fever and headache from the exposure the evening before, so I had to content myself with a robust coolie, but did nothing that day. We were again awoke by the cold at night, in a goojur's hut below, and were snowed up in it all day, but succeeded in getting down to camp by dark, after some nasty shaves through tumbles on the slippery, melting snow. It was frightfully cold to the feet, and rheumatism gave me awful twinges in the right knee; however, I adopted the natives' remedy, saturating my knee in bears' grease, and was able to get out again on the morrow.

Soon after dawn we tackled a nullah to the south-west, leading up to the ridge, and it was a real stiff climb. We saw some small markhor only, and at dark reached camp under a friendly cliff, flushing a good many Koklas pheasants in its vicinity.

Next morning, after the usual early breakfast, we went up the cliff, another very stiff climb, on to the ridge top; here we turned along to the east, found tracks and heard stones rolling down from time to time, but could not get sight of any game, on the extremely steep cliffs. About noon the goojur spotted two markhor lying under a pine tree a long way below, on the end of a moraine, where it fell over into the valley below. They were 500 yards away, and the ground was bad for a stalk, being steep and smooth with snow. We had to commence by crossing an open space, in full view of the markhor if they had been looking our way, up

hill, but, as usual, they chiefly watched the hill-sides opposite and below them; and by a judicious use of the glasses we were enabled to remain stationary whenever they scanned the snow and rocks we were on. At last we reached some juniper bushes, where I left the goojur, and continued sliding down the snow on my back—an exceedingly cold, wet job I made for a dead tree I had marked before commencing the stalk, and advanced to within 40 yards of the game. Here a difficulty arose, as there were three pines, and from the position I was in (so different from those I had occupied *en route*), I could not determine under which the game lay; the ground was broken much—very different from the flat patch it looked like from above.

Having the rifle cocked, I carefully commenced reconnoitring, first one side of the stump, then the other, but could not detect them. Suddenly they started up from amongst the hollows, about twenty yards away from me, and bolted over the edge of the moraine like a flash, and I missed the shot I snapped at them, after giving a "chuck, chuck!" to try to halt them. They must have been watching me for some time behind the tree, you might say, but I think not. I had the wind, and they were probably gazing in other directions, until some movement of my head attracted their attention, and then they were off "eck dum" ("one breath," *i.e.*, instanter). I had been looking for them under the wrong tree for five minutes. Had I hit off the right I might have bagged both! I reloaded and ran on to cut them off along the face of the moraine; but they did not appear, so I turned back, and on looking down over the edge, hanging on to a bush, saw the head and shoulders of one—the bigger, I believe. He was gazing up at me, not 30 yards below. I let go the bush, trying to fire at his neck, but had to aim through some grass growing in the cleft of a rock about half-way down, and on firing could see nothing. Almost immediately a markhor appeared at the bottom of the steep part of the moraine, and stopped, turning to look up. No doubt, my clothes being the colour of the rocks, I was still not quite identified with *genus homo*, and the sounds of the shots had reverberated all round. I had reloaded, and was about to fire, when he moved off across the huge boulders that lay huddled together just as they were left by the snow on an opportune plateau on the hillside.

He could not travel very fast, but his movements were not in a bee-line by any means, and I put up the leaf for 200 yards, before trying a shot, as he was a long way below and away from me. I aimed between his shoulders and let drive. Immediately I saw him stagger, and his hind feet slipped off a rock. I guessed I had bagged him, so watched him going on much more slowly, quite crippled behind, and at last down he dropped, rolled over a couple of times, and lay dead. The goojur went to hallal him as usual, so I looked the other way till that operation was accomplished, then clambered down carefully and across to the spot. I found the horns very straight, and therefore not so long as they appeared, being only 32in. On following the course of the bullet, I found the

kidneys and stomach all smashed up. My aim had been to reach the lungs and heart, but the animal's movement had been more than I had allowed for, and the bullet entered the back in front of the right hip. It came on to snow hard, I could see no trace of the other markhor, so had to make for camp below, which I reached very cold and wet, the snow turning into sleet in the lower and warmer valley. I saw a good many pheasants *en route* (one being that erroneously yclept "Argus" in the Himalayas), and clambered down the cliffs alongside a waterfall of about 250ft., that did not touch a rock from top to bottom. It was a grand cascade, but the weather was not quite suitable for sight-seeing.

Next day being Sunday, I did not go out, but devoted Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday to the ridges and corries, and, seeing nothing but females and small males, I did not fire a shot. The heavy snow and frosts at night were driving the game down, for all big tracks led away towards the valley where I had shot the last. So ended my most charming rambles after markhor.

CHAPTER V.

IBEX.

I WAS unable to get any leave next season, but had a good turn on detachment in a hill-station for the months of May and June. I was often after leopards, but never saw one. A *bunyiah* (vendor of grain foods) shot a very good specimen at a cross-road within a quarter of a mile of camp, with an old match-lock. Such is luck!

The succeeding year I was more fortunate, and determined to visit the ibex in one of his strongholds. Kashmir was crowded out before I could have reached any decent ground, so I moved into some wild country by another route. On my way I met an old Forest Department officer, who made my mouth water with his tales of ibex, whose heads I might see at places he mentioned, where they were arranged on piles of stone. He had spent winters in their haunts, and had shot them under the favourable circumstances existing some five-and-twenty years before my time. Rifles were muzzle-loaders then, and by no means express, but all game was much more plentiful, less harassed, and therefore less wary.

For this game the best glasses procurable are necessary, as it is often at a great distance they are sighted, and careful scrutiny is imperative to save the sportsman a useless and exhausting clamber. Binocular telescopes I have not recommended, but lately I saw a pair by Steward that can be carried by anyone in the breast-pocket, which I strongly approve of: they supply a long-felt want.

After much trouble and tribulation I reached the foot of a snowy pass, over which I had to climb to find any of the game I required; one other brother of the rifle was there before me, waiting for the pass to open, only two or three natives having come over it with the greatest difficulty. Next day it was more open, and a large batch of hungry villagers appeared on the snow above, on their way into more hospitable regions to buy food after the rigorous winter. We had an awful clamber up, especially over the glaciers, where footholds for each step had to be cut with a small axe, in the hands of an old stager amongst the coolies. The glare was blinding, but my servants and I had dark goggles, so were not much troubled; the poor coolies hung rags over their eyes to gain some slight shade. Once on top of the pass, between 15,000ft. and 16,000ft., we had an easy time, the descent being much facilitated by the long slides we all made down the steep, loose snow on the north side of the range; the hot mid-day sun and cold nights, with frost, had formed

the glaciers on the southern side. Some of our slides were from 300 yards to 400 yards, down steep snow-slopes, which we negotiated by simply sitting down and letting ourselves go "*à la* toboggan;" it was so wetting that I placed my light mackintosh under that portion of the body that was in the greatest proximity to the slide!

It came on to sleet when we had reached the snow line below, and our condition on arrival at a miserable lean-to shed under a cliff was pitiable indeed; our quarters were filthy, there was no space on which a tent could have been pitched, and one coolie with the servants' *shuldarie* (tent) did not turn up that night. I felt certain he had perished on the pass, as he was old and infirm, and had simply come from sheer necessity, the wages (one rupee) being quite a large sum, on which he could subsist for a month at the least. Next morning a rescue party was sent up the gorge towards the pass, and met the old fellow toiling down, quite cheerful, but weak; he had wrapped himself up in the tent and slept under an overhanging rock. A little *aqua vitæ* refreshed him, and he was able to finish the journey out of the pass, but with a lighter load.

When I reached my ground it was the beginning of May, and I wandered over much country before I succeeded in getting a shot. I first tried in a nullah on the Kashmir frontier, and was nearly taken prisoner by the native ruler's guard, who were protecting some gold-smelting works. There were ibex on the cliffs around my camp, where no white man had shot for twenty years; but I was ordered out by the resident at the Kashmir court, and with a heavy heart I had to try poorer ground.

After a week's wandering in and out of nullahs, I found some game at last, and started next morning, after the usual hasty breakfast, to try for a head. I had two villagers from the next valley, to act as guides and rifle-carriers (I gave up the professional shikarie long ago as a real bad investment), honest, hard-working men, who were most useful, and took good care of me in some of the very worst ground I have tried. We first worked up to the foot of the landslips on the site of a village during summer months in years gone by. One day the slip began, the people and flocks escaped, and the next not a vestige of the village remained, only the edge of some cultivated patches. Such was the tale I heard, and very dangerous the remaining patches looked.

A few thin little pines grew at the base of the cliffs above the old village site, so we clambered up to them to reconnoitre. Stones came tumbling down, but we could not detect the game, so faced the cliffs where a small gorge made ascent practicable, and, after an awfully stiff climb, almost reached the top of the ridge, just below the old winter's snow.

Along the cliffs some ibex were detected by one of my men, so we worked over, above them; I got on to a sloping rock, and surveyed them through my glasses, being concealed by some rough herbage. Presently

I made out three males emerging on an old landslip covered with short green grass, and as they descended they skipped about in a most frolicsome way. There was no means of approaching them, so we had to wait till they had finished their repast and returned to the gorges; you may quite understand some time had elapsed, and we were much cramped. Luckily the wind was well in our favour, so we commenced to get down in the gorge next that into which they had retired, but all our efforts were very nearly frustrated by some females and young, who were lying somewhere below us, and had not gone down on the landslips. Fortune favoured us, however, for they were not aware of our proximity, and we got over the males we wished to secure; an overhanging rock supplied me with a good look-out point, whence I carefully surveyed some six or seven with my glasses. There was nothing very good amongst them, although the horns were very perfect and symmetrical, the best being very thick. I had two rifles with me, the old ·450 single, and a double ·500 by a less known maker, which I had picked up at the eleventh hour before starting on leave; it shot well with 5drs. of powder, but, having been originally sighted for only 4drs., there was a tendency to throw high with snap shots. I drew a bead with the ·450 at 250 yards at the best male's shoulder, having put up the leaf for 200 yards, as he was a long way from me, though a little below me; the bullet passed over him, I not having allowed enough for the difference in elevation of our respective positions. He started violently, but he could not discern my whereabouts, so I laid down the single and took up the double ·500. I fired at him again, but there was no apparent result. He started, but did not dare to bolt in any direction. The others all got huddled together, I may say, quite unable to ascertain the place of danger, and not daring to bolt. I then fired the left barrel, and apparently hit somewhere, for he gave an ugly wriggle, and fell down a little way before regaining his feet. I was quite disgusted with my shooting, for away they all bolted down the gorge, and over the ridge or angle into another. I snapped a shot at one just before crossing the ridge, at my feet almost. This time my men saw the bullet hit the rock over his back. I put down the 200 yards leaf, and waited a moment after reloading. The last male stopped on the ridge below before going into the next gorge, to try to discover us. That pause was fatal, for I drew a bead with the ·450 at the point of his shoulder, and he disappeared the instant I fired. As the smoke cleared there was no game in sight. I was afraid I had missed, for it was a very quick shot, almost a snap. On clambering down with great difficulty, I sent one man over into the gorge, and he found the game dead. On examination I discovered the bullet had gone high again, penetrating his neck, which it smashed, death being instantaneous. I had aimed fine in all cases, but I suppose I had overjudged the distances. His horns measured over 27½in. round the curve, well shaped, and the best in the herd. The skin was worthless, as the fall had knocked off much hair in patches, and the under winter-coat of wool (pashmina) was falling out. The others

had all gone off, not a sign of one being discernible for the rest of that day. The climbing was very severe, the cliffs being nearly perpendicular, and devoid of the friendly juniper bushes, common on some markhor grounds.

Next day I was away up the valley at dawn, and found three fine males feeding on a slope below the cliffs and snow. We made a stalk up a shallow nullah to the left, trying to get to their level; but whether some watchful female gave the alarm, or they had finished feeding, or they had got our wind in the shifty corner of the mountains, I do not know; any way, they were up in the cliffs when I made my stalk, and we lay like stones for more than three hours, hoping they would move into some gorge and allow us to shift, so as to make another attempt from above. No such luck, for there they remained, and finally, after a heavy snowstorm, we had to make for camp, drenched and nearly frozen.

I was after them in the morning again, but could not find them, though we hunted the hillside and watched for four or five hours; then it came on to snow, sleet, and blow, cutting us to the bone. We stood it until we were simply frozen, and had to make for camp over snow and rocks. Such fine heads, and real hard work after them, with no result. It was cold at the altitude of my camp, freezing every night. In the morning the small servant's *pal* I used could not be folded or packed until the sun had thawed it! You may imagine how much one appreciated an ulster, warm socks, drawers, and nightcap in bed. The latter consisted of a Wolseley valise and extra waterproof-sheet on mother earth, with blankets and *resai* rolled around one. The natives slept under a rock, with a big fire in front, but were very cold, I should have supposed; yet they had no complaints, and gorged themselves on the rank buck goat's-flesh.

For three weeks, off and on, I worked for these big ibex, and never got within shot. On one occasion I was nearly successful, having scaled the cliffs to the snow line, and got above them, but, when moving along for the stalk, some awful female gave the alarm, and they passed quite leisurely at about 300 yards above me! Had they been below, I would have risked a shot, but that distance up a precipice was too doubtful, and, though I returned to them once more, after a fortnight's tour round other nullahs, I never got a shot. I bagged two with the ·500 Express *ad interim*, and shall tell of them when discussing that size of bore.

As I look over the notes in my diary, I am puzzled to know how I had patience to endure the wettings and cold winds, day after day, with no result. Doubtless the size of the three "big 'uns" was a stimulus; for, if I could have got within shot, I might have got two, if not the three. I certainly was very sanguine, but my patience was not rewarded; it is doubtful if any other rifle has bagged them on that most awful ground. Probably they were all three over 40in.

Having been so unsuccessful with the three "big uns" in my nullah, I decided to leave them for a bit and try another place further up the river and on the other bank, so started with the shuldarie and a week's provisions. It was evening by the time we reached a suitable camp; and while reclining in my tent, a herd of small ones came by, and were seen by one of my men who was returning from the nearest village; he said they were not worth following, so I let them alone.

A lovely clear sky greeted us when the day broke; we had left the tent in the grey dawn, and clambered up over rock and grass until almost on the top of one of the main ridges running down from the mountain chain of everlasting snow, 25,000ft. high. The tracks of ibex were everywhere, and soon my sharp-sighted villager spotted some; they were in a most inaccessible spot, on the other side of a huge, bare cleft in the ridge; but as my glasses could promise nothing very good, I left them alone. About nine o'clock we reached the edge of a very steep and rocky gorge, immediately below perfect walls of cliffs, with other gorges and ridges beyond. The ground was so cut up and difficult, that I squatted under a friendly overhanging rock, reading, while my two men clambered up higher, and scanned the ground from the crest; they were under a good screen of small arbutus, which had found a spot to exist on here and there, on the very edge of the precipices. About half-an-hour elapsed before one of them returned to say they had discovered some game on the other side of the gorge, so I took the ·500 and clambered up to see. From my point under an arbutus, I could see nothing good, nor any way to reach them, unless I could scale the cliffs to my left and then descend further on, so as to get a shot from above. After a discussion, we decided not to attempt such an awful task, but to wait and watch from where we were.

While so employed, spread out on the rough herbage and rock, we were presently startled by the alarm-note of a female; looking up to my left in the direction whence the sound proceeded, I discovered two gazing down at us, not two hundred yards away. They had evidently clambered out of the gorge at some point higher up the ridge, but did not cross from the ibex we had been watching. Not a move did we make, just squinting out of the corners of our eyes, and praying they would move on and not alarm the herd. At last they moved away slowly, stopping twice to examine us again, and then literally bounded away in a manner one could not believe that any animal could go on such ground; they whistled a couple of times, but the slight breeze there was blew past instead of towards us, so we could hope the others were not alarmed.

Having turned our attention to the far side of the gorge again, we could see nothing, and were in despair, but presently a female clambered up into view, crossing over into our side, and being followed by four small males; then came two bigger males, and after a halt and good look round, they plunged out of sight, moving towards us. At once the older man and myself clambered up higher, so as to reach the spot where the two

first females had emerged, for I presumed the others must follow the same track. We were only just in time, for there was the female coming along a mere line on the face of the rock not sixty yards away; an angle quite shut out the rest of our side of the gorge. I quickly moved behind an arbutus-bush unobserved, and loaded; I there had a friendly granite rock on one side, just the colour of my Balaklava cap, so whipped off my puggerie and peered round the bush. A small male was standing at the corner looking in my direction, so I disappeared and tried the other side. There I found the female within twenty yards, staring at the bush but unable to detect me. I remained breathless, but at last the small male moved on, and was followed by another who seemed to rise from the rock as he stepped round the corner. Another and another followed, each in turn bigger than the one immediately before him, and finally the sixth and biggest. There they all were, along a ledge no wider than my hand, at distances from twenty to sixty yards from me; I dare not rise to fire, as the female was gazing at me. There was a grand scene before me: six wild goats of historic keenness of vision and smell scattered along a mere line of rock, varying in length of symmetrically curved horns, sunning themselves and looking away into the valley at their feet unconscious of danger, and thoroughly at home on ground that man could not cross without the utmost care and deliberation. It was a scene such as Landseer might have painted, and some wealthy sportsman might have paid four figures for. Alas, the scene has vanished save from my mind's eye, and the world will never view it.

After a considerable study of me, the female gave a warning whistle, and the males became alert, but gazed into the gorge and valley, not dreaming that man was so near them; they could decide nothing, even the biggest male being balanced with four feet on one spot on the ledge, head bent down, great beard hanging clear, and all his attention fixed on the ground below. He was broadside on to me, not sixty yards away, so I rose steadily, covering him with my rifle as I did so. Just as I pressed the trigger, they all commenced to move except him, and when the smoke cleared, there was nothing in sight; he had fallen head first into the gorge, on the opposite side of which a small male appeared almost immediately. Others followed, but I waited till the last and, therefore, second best showed himself, and gave him the left barrel, sending him reeling; he was nearly two hundred yards away, clambering round the loose shale at the head of the gorge. I had not ventured to attempt to reload till then, for the time was a mere pause between the shots, I may say.

I reloaded and tried to get the third best, believing his horns were about 31in. or 32in., but he was beyond my range, and I failed to hit him though I fired four shots, the last hitting about three inches above his back on the rocks he passed; when I subsequently found my second one was only a little over 29in., I was well pleased I had not killed.

With the aid of my two men, I succeeded in getting along the ibex ledge and down into the gorge, but it was a place where I could not help feeling that one false step would be fatal, and that without my hardy mountaineers I should be utterly helpless. We reached the second ibex, and found him dead enough where he fell; the bullet had got him in the ribs about four or five inches too far back, but I could not complain of my shooting, for the excitement was intense. My men hallaled him, and we then clambered down to the first. To my horror, one horn was pointing one way, the second the other, his skull having been fractured by the fall. I whipped out my tape and began to measure. Joy! joy! the 36in. tape was not long enough, and I found it took well over forty inches to follow the curve from the lower edge to the tip. On turning over the carcase, the hole showed that the bullet had hit the exact spot. I felt quite recompensed for all my previous ill luck and hard work, and returned to my tent triumphant. The ground was so bad that I wore out both heels of my grass-shoes, leather outer-socks and woollen ditto, and a good deal of the real tegument.

I made many more attempts after the "big uns" in my first nullah, but never succeeded in getting a shot: it would be tedious to relate my many bitter disappointments after labours almost incredible, when I look back. The one thing that I always found a great handicap in favour of the ibex was the absence of any hollows under a rock on the ground they frequented, where it was possible for a 6ft. Briton to spend the night. I had become used to small quarters when after markhor, but all my efforts to follow the same tactics and sleep on the same level as ibex were fruitless: I never found a spot where long bedding could be spread under a friendly rock. There were ledges here and there, but no shelter, and the risk of rolling over the edge was too great, besides the chance of falling rocks, which often whizzed down by day and night. We had many shaves, a stone of some half hundred weight just missing my second man one day as we lay on a small slope eating our frugal lunch; and the smaller ones that came down in showers were decidedly scaring at all times. Occasionally a great snow-slip took place, and then all was glorious confusion and uproar. We escaped such dangers, and I believe that the ground these wary ibex inhabited was as bad as any on which they can live. Had I been able to sleep there, I am certain I could have secured them, but a laborious climb in the grey dawn never enabled me to catch them unawares but once or twice, and then other opposing elements, namely, wind and watchful sentinels, defeated me. I might have fired at, and over, 300 yards, but it was my great desire to outwit them, and I have to acknowledge they quite defeated me, although they had some close shaves.

Looking over some friends' letters, I see one of them shot a 40in. and 33in. ibex right and left, having stalked within 20 yards of the first, and started the second (by the report), between the first and himself. He was suffering from fever at the time, and spent two days in camp recovering

before he could attempt to move on again. Luckily, the spot was just above his intended camp-ground!

Another well-known sportsman, our modern Nimrod, killed seven ibex in less than two months' leave, measuring 43in., 42in., 38in., 38in., 31in., and 25in. respectively. I believe a good shot on ground not lately shot over, may hope for as many, if not quite as good, heads still, but he will have to work very hard indeed, especially in the way of marching to and from his ground.

One sportsman who wintered in the Himalayas made a bag of thirty-two ibex, whose horns averaged 38in! I quote this from another great Nimrod's letter, and he was quite aghast at it, evidently. I never heard of anything to equal this, and would much like to have seen the heads, so that I could give the individual lengths from my own measurements.

CHAPTER VI.

GOORAL.

SHOOTING this small game is excellent practice with the rifle, as gooral inhabit slopes of grass sufficiently steep and slippery to demand care when moving, and easy adaptation of oneself to awkward positions when firing. I know no game that inhabits barer hillsides, where one must particularly study wind, and any cover obtainable from the natural slopes of the ground. It is a pretty little animal, wonderfully active over bad ground, and sufficiently plentiful on its regular haunts to repay one for a day's ramble after it.

I left them alone for some seasons when in pursuit of other game, but decided one year to have a turn at them during the interval between the end of the rains and commencement of the bara-singh shooting. I worked round to ground near Dalhousie, and found plenty of occupation with them.

Near camp a very round bare hill protruded into the valley. On this I was assured I could shoot some; so in the morning I started off, through long grass dripping with the heavy dew, and had a very stiff climb for a couple of hours before seeing any. My man at last spotted one in a very awkward place below me; it was on the other side of a narrow rift, but so perpendicularly below that I could not aim while sitting on the slope. I made a *détour*, and reached an overhanging rock by the friendly aid of some young fir trees, from which I had a better view. The game was still below me, but I could get no cover lower down, so crawled on to the rock and peered over. Judging the distance to be 230 yards, I put up the leaf for 200, and aimed for the shoulder; when I fired he bolted a short distance, and halted again, bewildered. I decided I must have fired over him, and put down the leaf, reloaded, and took a careful aim. When the smoke cleared he was gone; so I sent my man down to where the animal had been, and he shouted that he had fallen over the khud. So he had, and was lying some 800 feet below in the bed of the torrent. It took the native a long time to bring him up; but I was glad to find I had hit him on the right side and smashed him before he fell. The horns were not large; one being lost in the fall spoilt the head.

After a rest, I went for a long clamber along the east side of the hill, and found another above me, but missed him. It was another awkward position to be in, firing up hill, standing on a very steep slope, and I could not decide where my bullet went, but I think it was high. I got home late, tired and weary.

I moved camp next day and went to fresh ground, further up the east valley; the grass was rank and drenching with dew, but I found a gooral before long on the other side of a ravine. I could only see the head and neck, so had to make a guess for the shoulder, and fire from a nasty cold seat on the wet grass. I judged it to be about 120 yards, and aimed fine. When the smoke cleared he was gone, but my man went to the spot, found he had fallen or rolled down the hill, and at last recovered and brought him up. The bullet had hit fair behind the shoulder, as I had been very fortunate in my guessing. The horns were not broken, but they were small.

I had a long scramble over the hillside, made an unsuccessful stalk, getting no shot at a good one, and was well pleased to reach camp at last. Later on I had a couple of days on fresh ground, but, owing to the utter incapacity, if not actual opposition, of my local guide, I was baulked of several shots, and had to leave for the plains without another head.

CHAPTER VII.

BARASINGH.

THIS deer belongs to Kashmir and neighbouring States, not appearing beyond the Indus to the west or the Ravee to the east, as far as I can ascertain. I had not met with it in the markhor ground I had been on in Kashmir, having devoted myself to that animal alone, varied with an odd bear when moving about; but I was determined to try for one this time.

The stag is apparently similar to the red deer of Scotland, but I think a little heavier both in body and head. I devoted a fortnight to the pursuit of it, bagging one at the commencement, and then working hard without a shot for many days.

My path led me over a low pass into a valley clothed in beautiful pine woods, with cliffs and corries springing out of it on every side; the bracken had turned rich deep brown, and the grass was beginning to assume an autumn hue. I arranged my camp in a secluded glade, and next morning made off up a corrie, to reach the top of the ridge, so as to be above the game. We examined every glen and corrie for the noble stag I was in search of, but saw other game, an old red bear and two half-grown cubs, away below feeding, where they remained unmolested, as I would not disturb the ground. The hillside became more easy in its slope, so I sent one man, carrying my ·500 double, to have a look down into the valley below, while we kept along the bare uplands above.

Suddenly, as we came over the brow of a spur, my rifle-carrier dropped as if shot, and whispered that there was a stag below us. Sure enough there was, but he had only three points on each horn, and they were in velvet, so I declined to fire. As there was a good deal of tall bracken around the stag, I kept scanning the slope with my glasses to try to find a better head. I soon found one, with ten points apparently, so I prepared to shuffle down a little further, on my back, so as to get within range; feeling rather disgusted at having to tackle the game with a single ·450, while my double ·500 was on the hillside somewhere else, quite out of my reach. There was no use loitering, as its carrier had been halted by signs when the game was viewed, and delays are too dangerous to permit of my waiting till he could get round to us. When I reached a friendly boulder I intended to fire from, I found the big stag was looking straight up hill, and not down, as I supposed, when I commenced my stalk. He was about 120 yards away, so I covered the base of his neck with the rifle, but before I had a fair sight on him up he

jumped, and turned round down hill, looking into the glen at his feet. I was rather hurried by seeing the smaller stag also spring up, so aimed at the big one's shoulder and fired. Two hinds sprang up at the shot, and away went the four along the hillside, too far for a second shot by the time I had reloaded. He slowed down, so I felt sure I had hit him, and with my glasses I could see blood on his right side, high up.

They turned into a corrie about 400 yards ahead, and I soon saw the smaller stag and the hinds hurrying down the hill. It was evident the stag hit was too sick to follow, so we waited a bit, and presently he came out slowly, and went down hill at a walk until he reached some overhanging rocks, under which he turned. Away we went to finish him, but he did not like the spot, and moved on again into the next corrie, where I missed a snap shot as he went floundering through the heavy thickets. We followed him up for some distance through corries and ravines, finding a great deal of blood all along, but, as we could not come up with him, I turned down to the easy slopes below, while my man took up the trail. Presently he broke out of the copse in one corrie into another and larger one, and I hurried on for a shot; but he reached new cover ahead, bolting as I came into it, and led us a weary chase through much timber and ravines. He was not inclined to stop anywhere, so we had to keep following him up. His tracks were often lost, and not recovered for some time. At last he broke back, and I missed a snap with the double ·500, a young oak coming between me and the stag as I pressed the trigger. The oak was shattered, but the stag held on.

The chase was getting a long one by this time, but we stuck to it, and I got another snap with the ·500, missing with both barrels. I was disgusted with my shooting, but, as I was much pumped and unsteady, I could not expect better luck. I seized the ·450 from my other man, loaded it, and spotted the stag as he slowly clambered up the other side of a ravine, 130 yards away. He stopped to look round, and gave me a broadside shot, but I was so shaky and tired that it took me all I knew to press the trigger steadily. Down he dropped, with a broken back, and I sent a man over to catch his horns as he rolled through the bushes, to prevent his tumbling into the stream below. When I got across, I was delighted to find he was a ten-tiner, with an excellent coat as well. He was awfully fat, weighing about 400lb., and it was a long job skinning and cutting him up. The horns were beautifully clean and fine.

The fag home with a rifle to carry was no joke, for the ground was very steep; but I was so satisfied with the sport that I struggled on. I never had been excited so much over any hill shooting, and enjoyed it immensely. My missing four shots with the ·500 was not unlikely to happen, as it was sighted for 4drs., but I used 5! It sold me later on when after oorial, and it was then I determined on a ·450 Magnum as being the weapon for the hills. My first shot at the stag with the ·450 had hit him on the right side of the back, just missing the bone, and had exploded all down his ribs; the shock must have been very severe, but

another half drachm of powder, or a bullet from the ·500, would probably have dropped him at once.

The demesne-like appearance of much of this valley was enchanting, and I do not suppose more beautiful scenery can be found anywhere.

Next day I returned to camp below, seeing nothing *en route*, and then tried the hills again. I wandered over much ground for ten days, seeing a few hinds and small stags, but neither seeing nor hearing another big one. I met another sportsman and found the camp of a third, but neither got a shot, so I had to decide that no more could be done that season, unless I penetrated more towards Kashmir, and time did not permit it. I packed up and made for the Punjab, *viâ* Dalhousie and Umritsur, to look for an oorial before commencing a march of 700 miles down country.

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CHAPTER VIII.

THAR.

THIS game is not so much followed as it deserves, for, although its horns are not grand, it inhabits magnificent portions of the hills, and can be reached from many stations on the short leave, which is often wasted there.

The usual habitat is much the same as that of the markhor, but there are varieties of ground, from dense ringall-jungle to steep broken cliffs, and good practice at mountain climbing may be had by the tyro, before he tackles the more valuable game in another year.

The best thar head I ever saw or heard of measured only 15in. in the horns, but the grand ruff on the throat and neck rendered the trophy one to be proud of, and I am sure no sportsman would have despised it.

I was once on my way up to some ground near where this head had been shot, and as my men toiled along ahead of me I saw them all begin to totter, and I myself nearly fell, for an earthquake came on, the hills rocking and rumbling in a most awful manner. Nothing happened, and we reached the camp-ground all right. Next morning I was out at dawn on the head of some cliffs, and as the fog rolled away I had a wonderful panorama spread before me. Valleys, rivers, villages, forests at my feet, ending with a hill-station in the blue distance; while to my left rose the peaks of eternal snows, still white, but riven with the flow of the summer's melting. Crossing over the rocks, we could see a steep slope far below, and, after a careful scrutiny, descried some thar, but none good enough to tempt a stalk. We watched them for some time, to make sure no big male was amongst them, and then moved away to try some of the marvellous gorges or corries that cut into the cliffs. My man left me and disappeared over the edge for a few minutes to spy out the land alone.

He soon returned with tidings of three big males in a corrie; so I joined him, and we descended step by step down the face of the rocks for some hundred feet, when he turned me to the right along a ledge, and finally pointed to where he said the game was. A little herbage concealed us, but after a good quarter of an hour hunt I could discern nothing, even with the glasses, and the spot he pointed to was not a hundred yards away. The sun was in my eyes, certainly, but I could see the side of the corrie covered with a small shrub (some kind of bilberry), and nothing like game of any sort could I detect. I crawled round a little to the left, and peered over the edge of the rock, but, even with his finger before my eye, there was nothing I could identify. I began to think there was

something wrong with my sight or the native's, when suddenly I saw something move, and at once the head of a thar was as visible as if it lay on a table before me. The whole of its body was concealed by the shrubs, and, although the man said he could see three, I could not find the others. He became so excited that the beasts got alarmed, and up they sprang, literally rising from what looked a perpendicular mass of green shrubs, if I may so describe it. I had the single ·450 in my hand, and tried to select the best, firing hurriedly as they darted down the rocks. He disappeared, and, snatching up the ·500, I let the next best have it; he vanished into a cleft in the corrie, and I failed to stop or hit the third. Almost immediately afterwards I saw one falling head over heels down into the valley below, and two others clambering off. My men recovered one, hit fair enough by the ·500, but the other I either missed or hit in the wrong spot, for I never saw him again. The ground was so bad that I could not get down to the dead beast, and had to await the return of my man to get up to the easier ground above.

In the evening we saw a magnificent hoary old male on the far side of a wide ravine, but it was too late to follow him, and all next day on his ground was unsuccessful, for we saw many females and small males, but no signs of my friend. I spent three days more on these cliffs firing at nothing, and then returned to camp.

Next week I visited another part, but it came on to rain and literally poured for five days and nights with little intermission. I got out for an hour or two occasionally, seeing game but being rolled up in fog and mist before I could do anything, and the toil of clambering back and hunting for camp was awful. I gave in at last and went down to my permanent camp, luckily escaping any ill effects.

A few days after I met another shooter who had bagged the old male I saw the week before, or one very like it, as he crossed the hills the day after I went down; the horns were a little over 14in. I think, and he met with him just under the sheep-path he was marching along.

The first thar I ever shot was at long range with a 12-bore rifle, a regular fluke, but I shot a fine male with the right barrel at seventy yards, and missed another with the left a day or two afterwards. A friendly shepherd took me to their haunts, where we came on two feeding at the head of a gorge; they bolted up the rocks, and I had a nice shot at the chest of the first; he fell dead, but the 200 yards sight got knocked up somehow when I meant to raise the 100 for the other, and the bullet went just over him.

The skins are worth having for rugs when in good order early or late in the season, and I would gladly have a week after thar now if I could get the chance. The scenery is superb, and the various other game one meets with supplies much material for observation and study. Clambering up and down from thar ground, you may meet gerow, serow, bear, gooral, khakur, two or three kinds of pheasants, foxes and porcupines.

CHAPTER IX.

MUSK DEER.

THIS is not an animal either difficult to find or much of a trophy, but there are some points about its construction, appearance, and habits that I found worthy of note. From well-known books I had learnt a good deal before I ever saw one; still, my remarks may be of interest to even a well-read or interested person.

The long canine teeth of the male, protruding well below the chin, are certainly carried by no other deer except the khakur, and his are neither so long nor so white; their use seems to be pulling up moss and other food through herbage or even snow. Doubtless they would be a very efficient weapon in a fight, but I have never heard of a musk deer having been known to use them for that purpose.

The peculiar texture of the coat is another well-known feature, but it is certainly curious to see such minature porcupine quills forming the hairy covering of a deer. It is quite useless for preservation except as leather, which it supplies delightfully soft and clean, if dressed white.

The musk gland is only found in males, and cannot be described as valuable except from a mercenary point of view, as the odour is too overpowering and penetrating to suit any but those people who indulge their tastes in a gluttonous manner. The natives have a great hankering after the pod, and will rob you on every possible occasion of its contents, if not of the pod itself.

The appearance of this little deer ascending a steep slope in quick, short jumps, with its very long and pointed ears directed forward, always reminded me of a kangaroo; bar the tail, the resemblance was very strong, for neither sex have any horns whatever.

There is another peculiarity about it; on each foot the small false hoofs that hang from the pastern above the proper ones are very long, quite an inch, and very sharp. Consequently, its tracks consist of the usual deer type, but diverging or splaying a good deal at the toes, with two indentations in rear, caused by these false hoofs; each foot thus makes four distinct marks on the ground.

Another very curious trait of this beautiful animal is the noise it makes when bounding along a hill; there is a regular clatter, very much resembling the castanets of a negro minstrel troupe. I studied the subject carefully, and decided it was caused by the hoofs and false hoofs meeting together smartly as the animal rose from the ground, the removal of weight from the feet being so instantaneous that they came together

with a regular spring. Lately I read of the khakur, or barking deer, making this noise; though I often met with it, I never studied that species, so may be wrong, but I feel certain it is caused by the same movement of the feet-joints, and not by any portion of the mouth, as was suggested in the article I read.

Anyone who wants to taste real venison may have it from the haunch of the musk-deer; I never found anything to equal it, cooked in the primitive fashion of a bent stick and piece of string before a clear camp fire. In a pie, or cold, it is delicious, and I only regret that eating it entails the slaughter of a beautiful, harmless, and otherwise valueless animal; I rarely shot it, although I met with it scores of times.

CHAPTER X.

BEARS.

CERTAINLY these animals are a class distinct to themselves, on account of the curious formation of the joints in their hind-legs, their unusual shaped feet and snouts, and the resemblance their tracks bear to those made by the human foot when unfettered by civilised man's handiwork.

To look at a bear when groping about amongst logs and stones, searching for those larvæ and insectidæ in which his soul delights, you naturally note how slow, methodical, and even lazy he appears! Or should you surprise him up a wild cherry or apricot tree, how deliberate and careful he is as to where he places each foot while descending, stern foremost, into the jaws of death, held open in the hands of his great enemy, man! Or, again, amidst the Indian corn just ripening, what toothsome morsels he selects from the parent stem, ruthlessly broken down, and what ruin marks his track! Amongst a swarm of angry bees, too, what callousness he shows while being attacked at his vulnerable points; intent on the luscious honey, he heeds nothing but man, and even he must almost poke him in the ribs with the muzzle of his rifle to announce his arrival in a sufficiently remarkable manner! How anxious he is to get away with a whole skin, whenever that broad snout of his announces, with its wonderful twistings, that danger is near, and yet, how many are the sturdy hillmen who are carrying to their graves scars and cicatrices on various parts of their bodies, from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot, all inflicted by our slow, methodical, lazy, deliberate, careful, rash, destructive, luxurious, callous, fearless, timid, courageous friend in the black or brown coat!

And can't he travel, too! Just surprise him asleep at the foot of some mighty pine, or in a corrie below the ground the ibex loves. Why, he is gone before you can cock your rifle, leaving you rubbing your eyes and wondering which way he *did* go. His sight is bad, and if his nose were no better, he must have disappeared from the face of the earth long ago. That pig-like flexible organ is his sentry and watchman, and he seems to trust it as infallible, thus falling a victim to misplaced confidence at times.

The maternal instinct is well developed, and nothing is more interesting than lying concealed above a bear and her cubs while feeding below. The way she turns over the stones, roots out the luscious grubs for the youngsters, and looks out for danger as well, supplies much worth noting. When surprised, she will cover their retreat, and return to the rescue should one of them get nabbed.

In captivity they become very docile, and are easily taught tricks. It would be hard to enumerate all their accomplishments, but they certainly are very lively and amusing. I shall never forget awaking one night in a station in the Punjab, to notice at once the well-known "hoff, hoff" of a bear. The season was hot, doors and windows were open, but the punkah dispensed with at night. It flashed through my brain that this must be some pet escaped from confinement, and I puzzled myself trying to decide how to secure him or defend myself should he attack me. Bears were not within twenty miles of the station, and a flat cultivated country intervened, so he was not likely to be wild, but, if escaped from captivity, there was no saying what sort of a "budmash" he might be. I crept out of bed, looked out of the window, and, by the moon's bright light, descried a half-grown cub, walking about under a mulberry tree some ten paces away. I soon saw he was secured and went to bed again, wondering how in the world he came to be tied up in my garden. Next morning I found my chum in the other part of the house had brought the pet up from barracks, where she (for it was a female, after all) played hide-and-seek with the men often. It was so grotesque to see a six-foot Paddy come quickly out of one door into the verandah of his barrack-room, dodge in at another, and the bear after him, just too late to catch him. Round and round they went many times, and Bruin thoroughly enjoyed the romp, never hurting anyone, for her sharp canine teeth had been removed.

While chained in my garden it was most amusing to see Sally (that was her name) take a bath. The bath consisted of half a fifty-six gallon cask, sawn in two through the bung-hole in the usual manner; into this the *bheestie* emptied two or three *mussucks* of water, and then Sally began her antics. First she walked round it, shoved it about, peered over the edges, splashed an odd paw in, and played with it much as a cat does with a mouse. When tired of these simple pranks, she climbed on to the edge and remained balanced with the two hind feet close outside the two fore; there she remained admiring herself in the natural mirror, slapping at her reflection now and then. Presently she would begin rocking the tub, balanced as she was on one edge, and would keep it going up and down at great speed until she had succeeded in splashing at least half the water out. The see-saw motion was quite remarkable, for I never saw her upset the tub; she always retained the balance perfectly.

Her next move was to pretend to lose her balance while the tub was at rest, and flop well down into it. Out she would get again two or three times, and finally lie down in it, coiled up, with her nose near her tail She would then try the other side, and when she considered her ablutions completed, she always climbed out, upset the tub and sent it rolling away. After many shakes and rubbings she then climbed into the tree, reclined on a bough and dozed till dry and hungry. I forget what became of Sally, but her owner has joined the great majority, I regret to say.

I often was after bears in various parts of the hills, and found them

much scarcer than I had supposed, until at last I reached the regions that had been less harassed by the white man, and here they were fairly plentiful. Finally I often met with them when after other game, and many a Bruin owes his whole skin at the present day to my general rule of only firing at the particular game I was in search of. I found that rule conducive to much better results than that which lays down to fire at everything you see.

My first bear was a red female, and I came on her when ascending to some likely markhor ground. I had been weeks marching about in rain and mist, my leave being the last three months of the hot weather, with literally no luck, so I made up my mind to try to bag her and hope for the markhor. I was carrying the ·450 single, and my man had my double gun, so I remained quiet amongst some rocks, watching her rooting and scratching about on a grassy patch. She was so intent on her feeding that she never heeded me, and after a little time I aimed between her shoulders, for I was above and in front. Just as I was about to fire, it suddenly struck me it would be as well to use the double gun with ball, should she charge. I laid the rifle down, at half-cock, took the gun from my man, opened the breech and then gave it him back while I got the cartridges out of my belt. The poor fellow was so excited that he shut the gun with a bang, making enough noise to frighten a bear a quarter of a mile off, let alone 50 yards! I seized the gun from him, loaded and leaned it against a rock, then snatched up the ·450 and stood up for a shot. The bear was alert, of course, and bolted as I rose; I let drive, but went over her head with the snap. A half-grown cub followed her from amongst the rank grass, but my shot turned them, and back they came, galloping past me, about 40 yards away. I snatched up my gun and snapped at the cub, which was leading then, but missed, being unable to see him exactly owing to the grass. The old one galloped on, and I could see her all right, so had a good shot for the spot behind the shoulder, but aiming well ahead. I heard the bullet hit, but on she went for about 20 yards, then wheeled round towards us and began making an awful row. Down she tumbled suddenly, picked herself up, rose on her hind legs and advanced a couple of paces towards us, then tumbled again. I had reloaded and was waiting for a certain shot if she charged us; she was an awful sight, snapping her jaws and roaring, while blood and foam poured from her mouth. I saw she was done for when she fell a second time, so rushed to the brow to have another snap at the cub. I fired twice with the rifle, as he was going at an awful pace down a most precipitous hillside, but failed to hit, and afterwards was glad he had got off. I never fired at a cub again.

On returning to the old one, I found her quite dead, of good size and coat, and we rolled her over to see where she was hit. In the exact spot behind the shoulder there was the hole, on the other side a similar one, where the bullet made its exit. I was puzzled at the way she had lived and travelled after receiving such a wound in the right place, so cut her

open, when we had removed the skin. I found the heart divided from the centre to its lower side, as it lies in the body, with a rough jagged cut where the bullet had passed. Nevertheless, she had travelled about twenty yards at a gallop, and lived some half minute—quite time enough to have given a nasty blow had she reached a human being. It taught me a lesson, which I never forgot, for I always took good care to be above bears when firing, thus ensuring time to load should they charge. On the level or below them I believe they might often have given me "a nasty one" during my subsequent wanderings, and more than one friend has had a squeak for it through not following this old and well-worn rule. After skinning the game, we descended into a gorge, encamping on the banks of a torrent, where my blanket and waterproof coat formed a tent-d'abri. It poured all night, but thanks to my shelter and a thick ulster, I kept dry; my man was seedy next morning, so I dosed him with medicine, and he was soon all right.

On another occasion I had been a long tour round the head of the range after markhor, and was returning to camp, quite ready for a Sunday's rest, when I crossed a rocky spur, and looked down on a small blue lake and vast moraines, left by the winter's snow. Nothing could I detect with my glasses, so we clambered down, and between the moraines I found a bear had been rooting. We crouched down again, and I had a good look around, at last spotting one busy digging up some roots. The latter appear to be like the buttercups' in shape rather, but I never learnt their name. About a quarter of a mile intervened between us, but a friendly dry nullah, or furrow of an ice-plough, led up past the spot, so I was able to make a stalk under it and some friendly rocks. As near as I could approach was 200 yards, for cover ended then, and occasionally a glance was cast all over the ground by the game. I put up the leaf for 200 yards on the ·450, and waited until her movements brought her broadside to me. She was grubbing away with both fore paws, so I aimed behind the shoulder and let her have it, firing off the knee. She received the bullet, and was quite knocked over, but got up quickly, looked about a second, and then made off slowly down hill. After her I ran as hard as I could, with the double gun in my hand to finish her. She managed to keep well ahead of me, though limping badly, so I tried a couple of shots, but was too jumpy, and sent both over her. I decided I was too far off to do much damage, even if steady, as it was difficult to judge distance for the gun, so hurried on after her for about 200 yards, gaining rapidly until within about 80 yards. A friendly moraine came to my aid, for she crossed it, falling often, while I skipped from stone to stone in a manner more reckless than I ever tried before or since. Some angel must have guarded me, for my grass-shoes never slipped, nor missed the spot chosen for them as I glanced along my course. The bear and I left the moraine abreast, and I pulled myself together, breathless though I was, and gave her one, breaking her back and right shoulder Die she would not, so I had to put a bullet through the poor brute's head

to finish her. My Express bullet had landed on her right elbow, it having been drawn back as I fired, splintering it to atoms, and then passing in pieces into her chest. The shock must have been great, for bears with one leg broken generally manage to escape.

On another occasion, I moved camp, and from my new quarters, on a high spur, I spotted a red bear very busy, grubbing up roots on a deserted "gōt" (sheep-yard). A deep valley intervened, and I was looking for barasingh, so left him alone for two days. Having failed to find deer on that side of the range, I moved over to the bear's haunts, with my usual flying camp of bedding, food, and small servant's tent. On arrival we found our bear at work on another "gōt," about a quarter of a mile beyond; he was very busy, as usual, so I was able to make a good stalk by detouring above and behind him. The herbage was so rank on the "gōt" that on entering it I could see nothing for some time, but at last found Bruin, and leant against a rock while I fired the ·450 at him. Somehow I was unsteady, and he bolted on my firing. I seized the ·500 double which I had left against the rock loaded, and covered him again; he stopped and stood up on his hind legs for a better view. The ·500 was directed at his chest, over the point of the shoulder, and he dropped dead, with the bullet correctly placed, from about 200 yards. This was a standing shot, with no rest. I found on examination he was the fattest bear I had ever killed, and I keep some of his grease still, for polishing gun-stocks. After skinning we clambered back to the shuldarie.

On the afternoon of the same day my man found another about half a mile away, amongst some brushwood and high vegetation; he was a long way below us, and looked like a lady's tiny muff! We went after him, and after much sliding and scrambling on a greasy and steep hillside, I sat down to have a good examination of the ground before arranging the stalk. I found the vegetation and brushwood so high and thick that it would be impossible for me to make anything like a noiseless approach through it, so decided I must fire at the animal from above. I moved along the hillside and then down, through some brushwood, until I got seated where I expected to fire from. I could only see his back occasionally, as he moved about amongst the weeds, so waited for some time till he came into a sort of lane through them that ran in a direction away from me. Judging the distance to be 200 yards and more, although a good deal below, I took a very full sight with the single ·450 at the back of his head, as he stood tail towards me. I could only just discern him in the shadows of the evening, but on pressing the trigger and the smoke clearing, I saw him unmoved, apparently listening. I reloaded and scanned him with the glasses; not a move, so at last I decided he was dead in his tracks, and we went down. Dead he was, for the bullet had penetrated behind and under the right ear, going into the brain and smashing all the skull, &c.; the effect must have been instantaneous. I consider the bullet hit about three inches to the right of where I aimed, but he may have moved his head a little as I fired.

He had a fine brown coat, and was of full size. I slept well that night, quite satisfied with the ·450, although I had missed with it in the morning.

I remember killing a very fine black bear with a single bullet from this little rifle while returning to camp from a day after markhor. That day was an eventful one, for my shikarie (as he was in his youth, probably!) took me up an awful wall of rock, where the foothold was mostly small edges of slatey stuff, about two inches wide, while below us was a clean drop of 1500 feet had we slipped. The old man's nerve was gone, for he shivered and gave up; had it not been for his nephew, an active young scamp, I should never have got safe out of it, I believe. The old man had been on the ground three times before, he said, and afterwards acknowledged he had always funked it! I hope none of my readers will have the misfortune to meet with another shikarie of this sort.

However, I have digressed, and must resume about Bruin. We were thoroughly tired, and had come down into some of that forest scenery that makes parts of the Himalayas like dells in an English woodland. There were bushes something like a coarse oleander, with luscious purple berries hanging in small bunches, of which bears and natives were very fond. Suddenly my young attendant thrust the ·450 into my hand and pointed out a black bear below us. I could see the bushes moving, and at last got a glimpse of the ears and *top* of his head. I had loaded while trying to catch sight of him, so was ready, but could not determine where his chest or shoulder was, so had to wait, and caught him as he came out on to a small open space. He was moving up hill and past us, so I just got a glimpse of the chest, aimed where the horse shoe on it should be, and fired. Round and away he went down hill, making a great outcry, which sounded much the same as a human being shouting "I'm off! I'm off! I'm off!" Having reloaded, I sent a snap shot after him through the bushes, and all noise soon ceased. The natives climbed a tree overlooking the route he had gone, and said he was lying dead. I ordered a few stones to be rolled down, to make quite sure he was defunct, and we then descended to him. We rolled him down to a convenient spot for skinning, and found the bullet had caught him fair nearly in the centre of the horseshoe, cutting the jugular vein and windpipe; his lungs were a mass of blood, yet he had travelled some fifty yards down hill before he succumbed. The skin was in a beautiful glossy condition, such as one sees on military accoutrements when really well got up. My snap shot had not touched him.

When narrating about the ·450 and bears, I included the occasion on which I missed with it and bagged with the ·500. I had some varied experience with the latter, and will just give some details of the powers and defects I found in it.

I remember well being interrupted in a bit of sewing I was at when

resting in the shuldarie, after an awful climb after ibex, by my man coming in to say there was a very large red bear feeding on a "göt nearly a mile below. I had been away on ibex ground all the forenoon, and had been driven home by the intense cold of snow, sleet, and strong wind, but it had cleared in the evening. I was loth to stir, but, as my man insisted on the great size of the brute, I strolled out and had a good look through the glasses. Yes, he was a beauty, but I never started with less energy than on that occasion. I took the ·500 double and clambered down until I got amongst some boulders, which afforded me good cover for a stalk; by their kindly aid I got within sixty yards, but his stern was towards me, so I could not fire, I thought. I wound round to get a shot at his shoulders, when he suddenly looked up, straight at me, and I found I had been mistaken; I had taken his shoulders for his rump, his head being buried in the ground, rooting about, and partly concealed by the rocks. I was just about to fire when he bolted, so I stood up. and, when he came out clear of a slight undulation, about 120 yards off, I fired; over he went, and died immediately. The bullet hit in the loin high, about a foot too far back, and some 6in. too high, but the shock was so great that he never recovered himself. On skinning him we found his inside cut to ribbons; the bullet had travelled forward and downwards, bowels, paunch, lungs, heart, and liver being all hard hit. The coat was the best I ever *shot*, but not the best I ever *saw*. I will now tell the tale of that trophy which I failed to secure.

I had been for a tour along excellent ibex ground, but been baffled by the nature of the precipices, which were quite impassable for such distances, that we could cover but little ground in an entire day. There was an awful wild grandeur in those mountains, and game was secure enough against man as long as it remained there, although exposed to other dangers from snow-leopards, avalanches, and snow-slips. After three days toil, sleeping little and shivering much, I decided to return to the river, cross, and have a rest at my permanent camp. I had heard of a wonderful bear on the valley side, but did not expect to see him, when suddenly my man pointed out a very white mass moving along towards, but below us. With the glass I discovered it was a red bear, with a splendid coat, so long that it wobbled about like the heavy fleece on a sheep at shearing time! "By Jove! there is the very bear," I thought, and we squatted to watch him. He was about a mile away at first, but approached at a good pace, so much so that I decided he had been alarmed elsewhere, and was seeking his refuge. He at last reached a gorge running down from us, entered it, and lay down under a pine, on a gentle slope, burying his head in his two fore-paws! I never had the luck to see a bear in a wild state do this before or since; it was quite a study to see how he settled himself and prepared to sleep. He was too far away for me to attempt a shot—some 500 yards—so I directed my men to take me down the mountain, outside the gorge, until we had reached his level. They did so, but I could not get into the gorge, nor

shoot across it, until I had got below the bear almost, and could not fire at the long range it was across. At last we managed to get in at a villainous spot, and crawled along till I reached a point hanging out from my side of the gorge. Here I could see Bruin fast asleep apparently, but the light was going, and I found much difficulty in taking aim. I could get no nearer than 250 yards, so put up the leaf for 200, and aimed full for his shoulder. When the smoke cleared I saw him alert and standing up. I fired the left barrel, and away he went at a great pace up out of the gorge. I fired two more rounds, but failed to stop him, and from then till now have been unable to say whether I hit or missed, but I feel certain I missed, probably by over-estimating the distance across space, and in a bad, half-light. I was disgusted with myself, and have never been able to feel otherwise than that by some bungling I missed as fine a bear as ever was seen in the Himalayas. On descending into the gorge from my firing point, I found a rough track used by game (and probably by goats and sheep), which led up the mountain, and by which I might have got within fifty yards of Bruin had my men or I known of it. It was the only track on that mountain side, from its crest down to the mighty torrent in the valley below. My men did not know the ground, for it was only once in some years villagers reached it, there being no bridges that flocks could cross for many miles, and no villages on that side for about forty!

Not many miles from that spot, but on the other side of the river, I was coming down a spur, after two or three unsuccessful days after ibex, and pitched the shuldarie under a rock, from the top of which I had a view into a deep and rock-walled valley. I was seedy, with a sore leg, caused by a pink-coloured tick having buried his head in the calf and left a portion behind when being ejected; consequently, I was unable to go out for a clamber, and lay down after having scanned the ground with no result. My man remained on the look-out, and presently came in to say that a large brown bear was feeding under us, far down in the valley. I hobbled to the edge and looked over, to see a small brown ball rolling along an erratic course. It was so very brown that I considered it worth securing, so directed my men to strike the tent, pack up, and follow me down the ridge, when they heard the report. As the bear was working to the mouth of the valley, I judged that, by hurrying down the ridge, which formed its mouth on one side, I should be able to meet him as he emerged and secure a good shot. Taking one man and the ·500 double, away I went, and had much pain and trouble owing to the great drops between the ledges. I had scaled the range by another route, which was much easier. We were not long getting down to the mouth, where I expected to meet Bruin, but there was no view into the valley, owing to the way the rocks curved, so we moved on, and tried along a ledge until stopped by a cleft; I remained on the end of the ledge, and sent the native to try to get ahead by climbing higher first, so that he might discover Bruin's whereabouts. Just after he left me I heard a heavy stone being moved, so looked over, and there was my game, not twenty yards off, moving

along a lower ledge and feeding. It struck me I had been very successful, for I had resisted my man's advice to turn into the valley some 500ft. higher up, pointing out that I had spotted a rock from above as being at about the right level to meet the bear if he continued to travel the same route.

Poor Bruin did not heed me, and was utterly unconscious of danger. I lightly stepped two paces to get behind a small arbutus on the edge of my platform, slipped two cartridges into the rifle, and then turned towards him. It may seem I ought to have been loaded before, but the ground was so dangerous that I could trust neither my man nor myself with a loaded weapon, and from habit the loading was carried on without any noise whatever. I looked over again, and found he was feeding and moving on, so waited until he was passing inside another small shrub. If I could kill him there I thought his body would be arrested and saved the fall down into the old snow and torrent some 600ft. below. I aimed between and behind the shoulders; he dropped stone dead, but, as the muscles relaxed, he slipped off the narrow ledge and went rolling down into the stream. My man had remained like a rock, leaning back against the cliff in a most awkward position, from the time he heard the stone moved until I fired. I was too done to attempt to retrieve the skin that evening, so ordered camp to be pitched on a small plateau near by, and lay down there till morning. My men were up early, and we descended to the stream, skinned a large and well-coated very brown bear, with a small open wound in the right forearm, and then clambered down and home to camp, where I was laid up some days.

On one occasion I had a most tremendous fag after a fine bear which I did not secure, and it was such a curious case that I shall add it.

My camp was pitched at the end of a narrow valley, under the shade of steep mountains, with a view of limited width at the face of the ground on the other side of the mighty torrent which flowed past its mouth. One of the men came in to say a bear was feeding on a landslip on the other bank; I went down to the valley's mouth, some hundred yards, and could see Bruin quite plainly, but he was over 300 yards away. He was a good one, with a long, light-coloured coat, but the distance was too great, the river impassible, and the nearest means of crossing was a "Julie," or suspension bridge made of plaited sticks, two miles away, only traversable by hardy mountaineers and eager hunters. To it we went as fast as we could travel along the mere scratch of a track, which nearly proved fatal to me, for one of the three small poles across a cleft (on which some flat stones made a path) snapped under my foot, and I fell through, but luckily jammed with my knee against the next pole and my side to the rocks; had my knee missed I might have slipped down into the river in a brace of shakes, and from it there was no hope of return. My two villagers grasped my hand and hauled me up, but I was a good deal shaken, and had to rest a bit. At last we reached the Julie and crossed with much care, for it was a mere skeleton of a thing, made

entirely of twigs, about 100 feet from bank to bank and about 80 feet above the roaring torrent of dirty snow-water. It hung in a great curve and swayed in the breeze in a very nerve-shaking manner. Having got safely over, we headed up stream for two miles, and were soon opposite camp, where my look-out man was signalled to for information; he waved his blanket about but we could not decipher his meaning, and no human voice could have been heard above the roar of the waters. It was getting dusk, so we turned up the mountain, finding the ground far more extensive and jungle-covered than it looked from camp. At last we got on to the landslip, which was all loose rocks varying from a cubic foot to an ostrich egg in size! In the dark I at last saw the game, moving away and down, but could not emerge from the cover I had, a friendly little pine, so tried a long shot and missed; doubtless I was unsteady after my four miles scramble and risky fall, but I felt it was my only chance to fire standing where I was; away he went and I never saw him again. We returned to camp more leisurely than we left it, but I was indeed thankful to get some supper and turn in.

I may add here that it is worth while to cut out the large canine teeth of all bears, as they make very pretty brooches, mounted in silver; indeed, they may be used for many other little jobs, such as handles to small paper-knives, heads of walking-sticks, &c.; they split in the dry heat of the plains if not encased in beeswax.

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